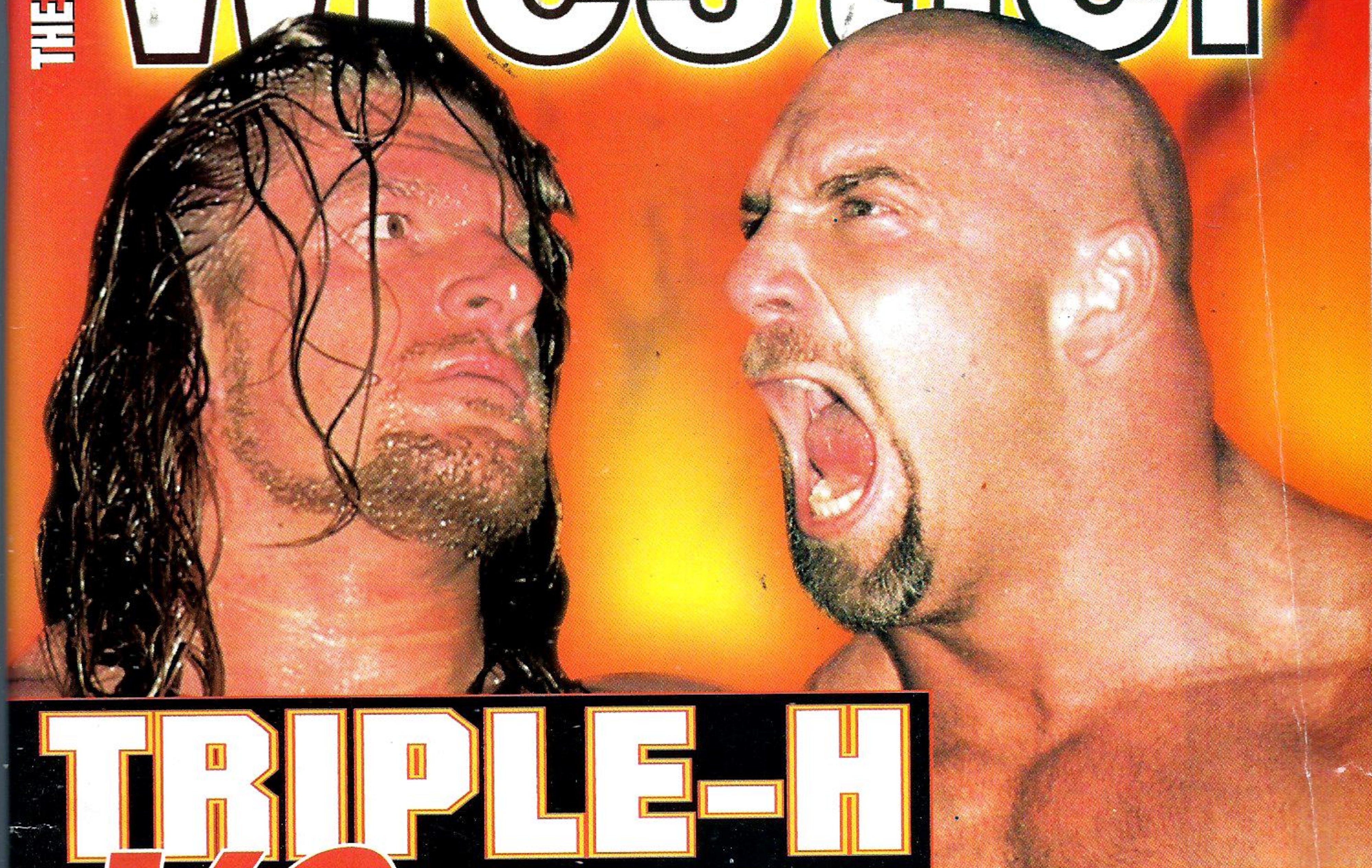


SPECIAL ISSUE! MUST-READ WWF vs. WCW ANALYSIS!

THE WRESTLER

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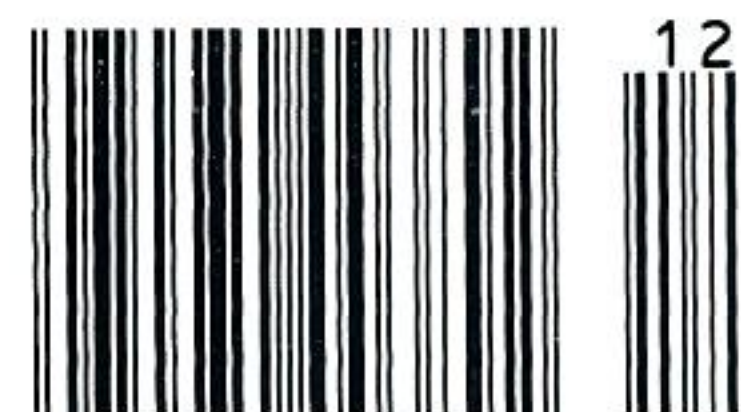


TRIPLE-H VS. GOLDBERG

**Their War Of Words
Almost Turns Violent!**

December 2000

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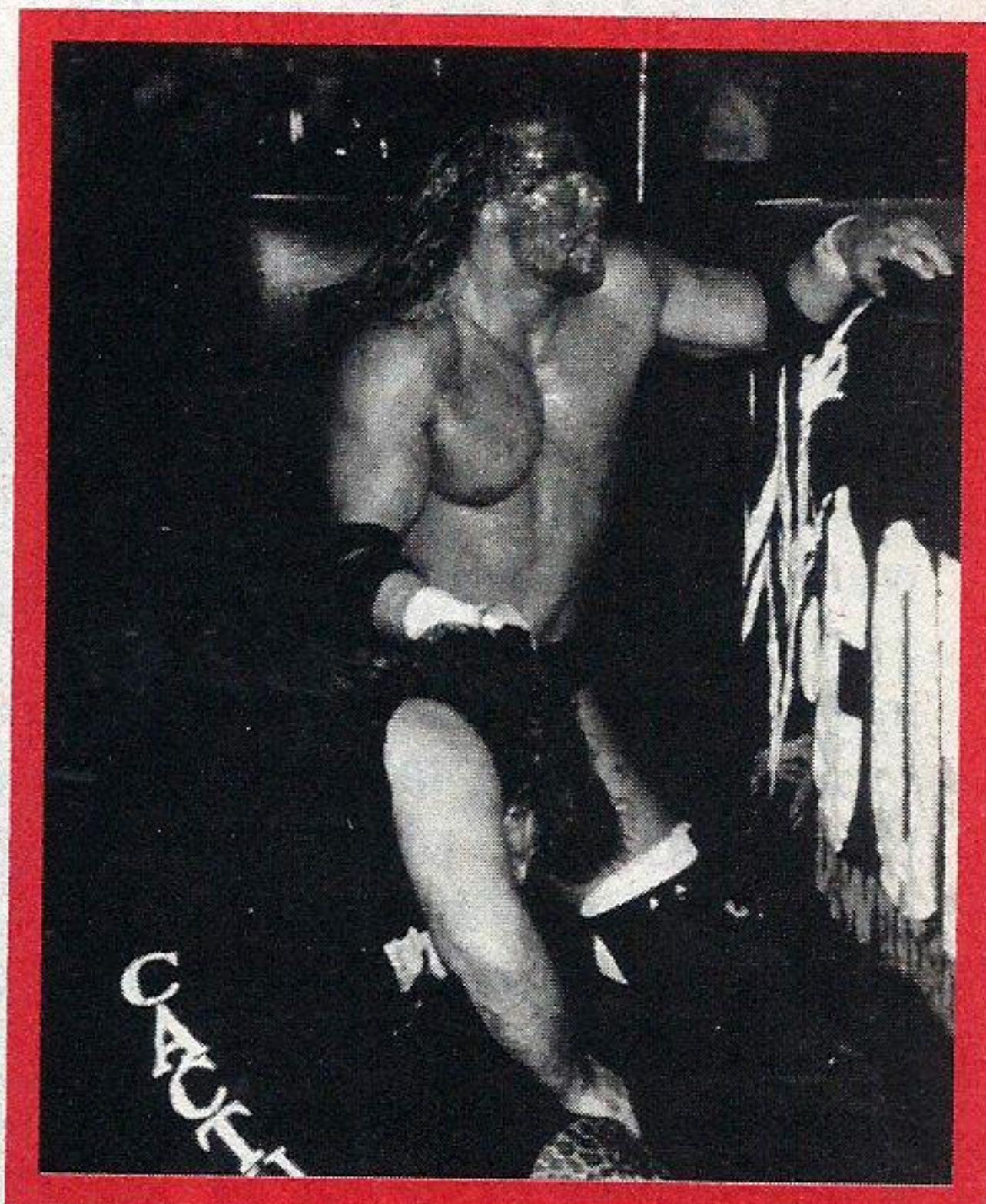
**WWF vs. WCW
TOP 10
FACEOFF!**

**Rock vs. Booker T
Y2J vs. Nash
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MORE!**

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DEPARTMENTS

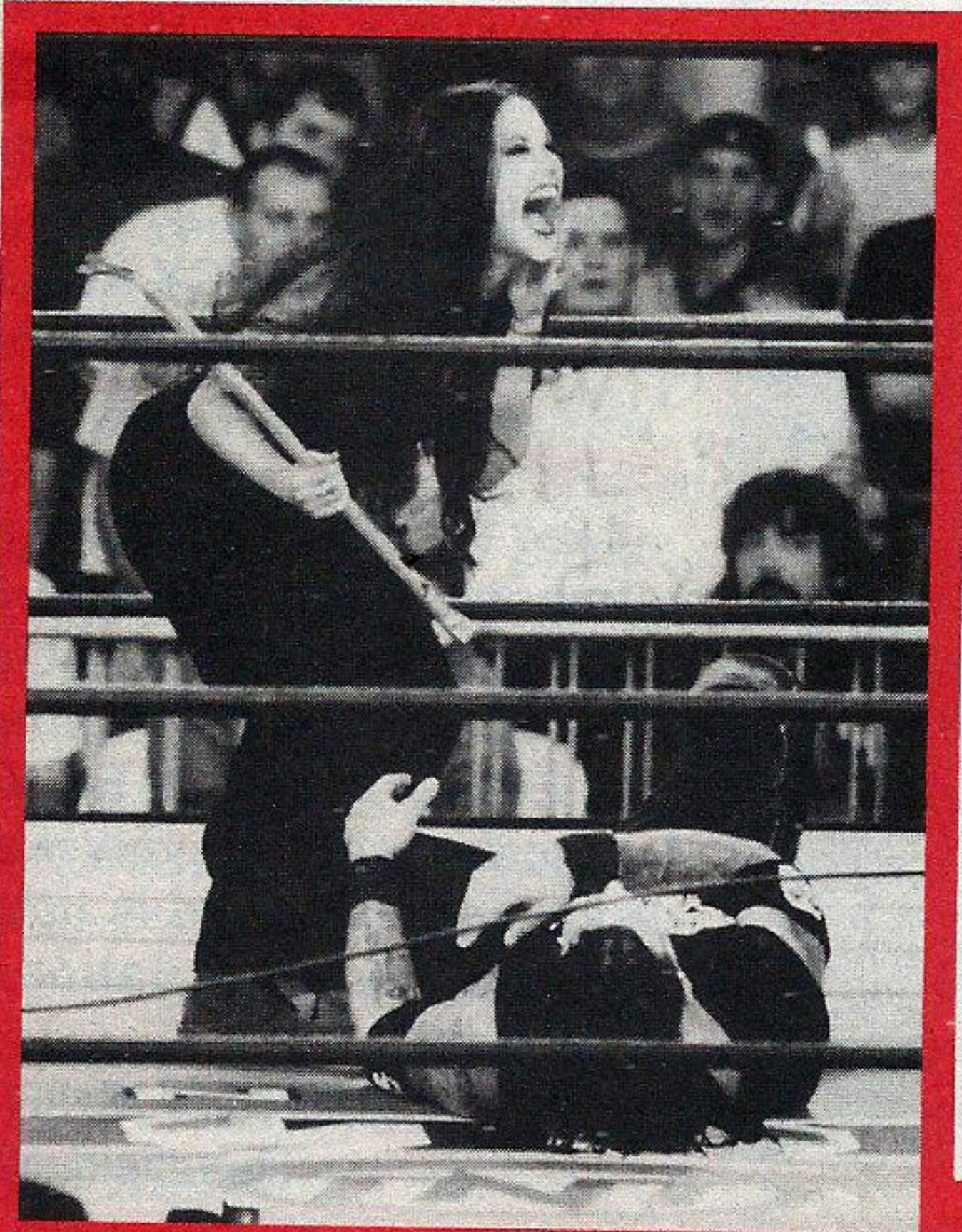
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YOUR Letters

CAMP CURTIS

I recently attended the first annual Mark Curtis Memorial Pro Wrestling Fantasy Camp. Dean Malenko sparked the idea for the camp to honor Brian Hildebrand, who wrestling fans knew better as referee Mark Curtis.

Most of the wrestlers were very nice and personable. In addition to instructing in the ring, they took the time to talk with the fans, take pictures with the fans, and even sign a few autographs. The camp is an amazing opportunity to get to learn a few moves (it is not as easy as it looks) and rub shoulders with some of the best wrestlers in the business.

Having been a camper this year—the only female—I know I had the time of my life.

LIZ MALONE
Bethany, OK

YES, YOU WERE

Was I the only one grinning from ear to ear when Big Vito smacked former Mamaluke partner Johnny the Bull over the head with a kendo stick and proceeded to DDT him on a table?

Ever since he ran with Da Baldies in ECW, Big Vito has been a killer. He laid waste to New Jack, Tommy Dreamer, and others with clout in the federation before leaving for the

greener pastures of WCW. Upon arrival in WCW, he made a mistake by aligning with the laughable Disco Inferno, but the killer instinct was still there lying dor-

mant, waiting for the right time to re-emerge.

The right time was the night Eric Bischoff robbed Terry Funk of the WCW hardcore title. One night later, to thank them for their help, "Easy E" awarded The Mamalukes the belt, which Vito quietly assumed. Five days later, Vito cleanly pinned Terry Funk to defend the belt. How many can boast that?

Big Vito has truly arrived. Goodbye, Mamaluke ... hello, *paisan!*

BRANDON LEAGUE
Carrolton, GA

POSITIVELY KANYON?

I hope "Diamond" Dallas Page gets Kanyon. Page helped to elevate Kanyon in the minds of the fans, yet all Kanyon can do is stab DDP in the back and make a mockery of his book, *Positively Page?* What a miserable fellow.

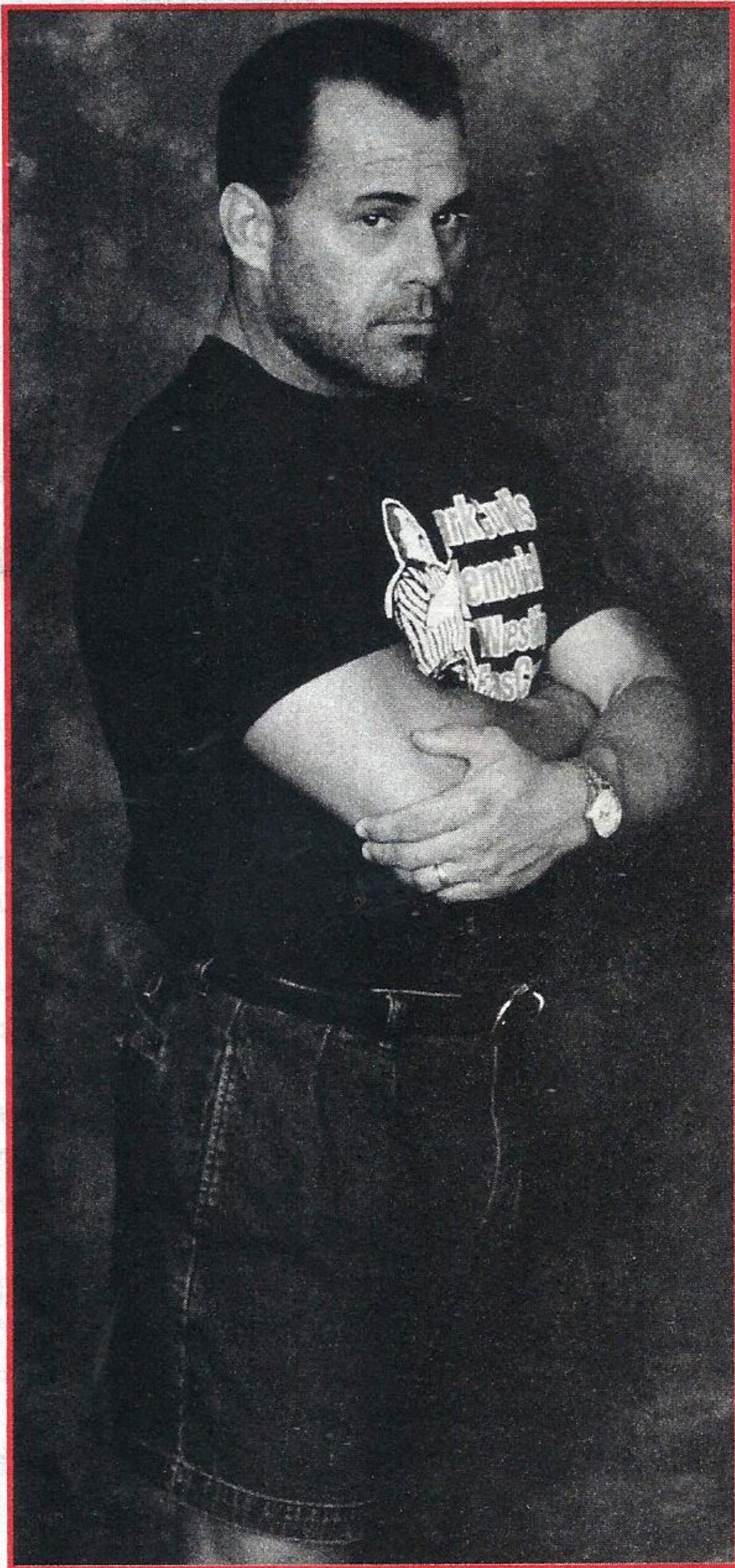
NANCY KELLS
Twin Lakes, MI

ECW ON ???

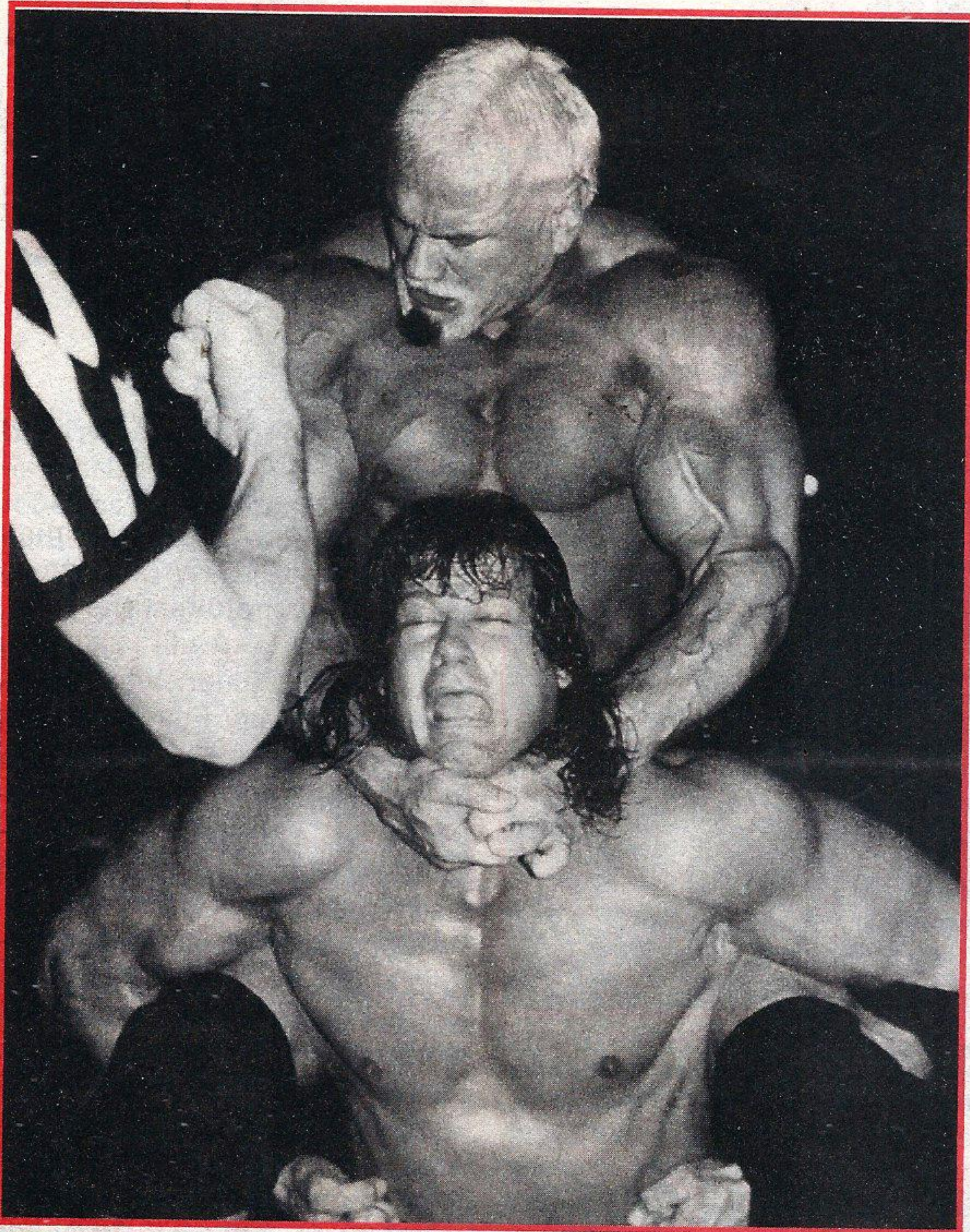
Now that TNN has come to terms with the WWF and is getting rid of ECW, I hope that USA or FX comes to terms with ECW. I know that ECW's syndicated show is very well distributed, but there is nothing like having a national cable outlet.

LESLIE CUSHING
Readfield, ME

THANKS ... WE THINK
Harry Burkett's "Q & A" with



Dean Malenko helped to organize the Mark Curtis Memorial Wrestling Fantasy Camp to honor Brian Hildebrand (a.k.a. WCW referee Mark Curtis), who died last year. Liz Malone gave the camp a rave review.



Scott Steiner (choking Mike Awesome) is not an easy interview subject. Even so, that didn't stop Steve Walkill from critiquing Harry Burkett's "Q & A" with "Big Poppa Pump."

Scott Steiner (September 2000) was a very good read, but I wish I had learned a little bit more about "Big Poppa Pump."

See, I already knew that Steiner was a big, strong, tough guy with a freakish physique. I already knew that he had no conscience and could blow up at a moment's notice. What I wanted to know was what drove him to become the physical specimen he is today. How do you go about putting together a body like that?

Like I said, I thought the interview was good. I just wish I could have asked a few questions.

STEVE WALKILL
Estero, FL

WWF PREDICTIONS

After reading the predictions in the "WWF Midyear Report" (September 2000), I'd like to offer five predictions of my own.

1. Chris Jericho will win his first WWF World title. Not even The Rock and Triple-H will be able to stop Y2J.

2. Kane will remove his mask. Kane's only weakness is his fear of having his mask removed. If he were to do it himself and face that fear, he'd be unstoppable.

3. Steve Austin will announce his formal retirement. "Stone-Cold" will never be the same.

4. A third Dudley Boy will
(Continued on page 72)

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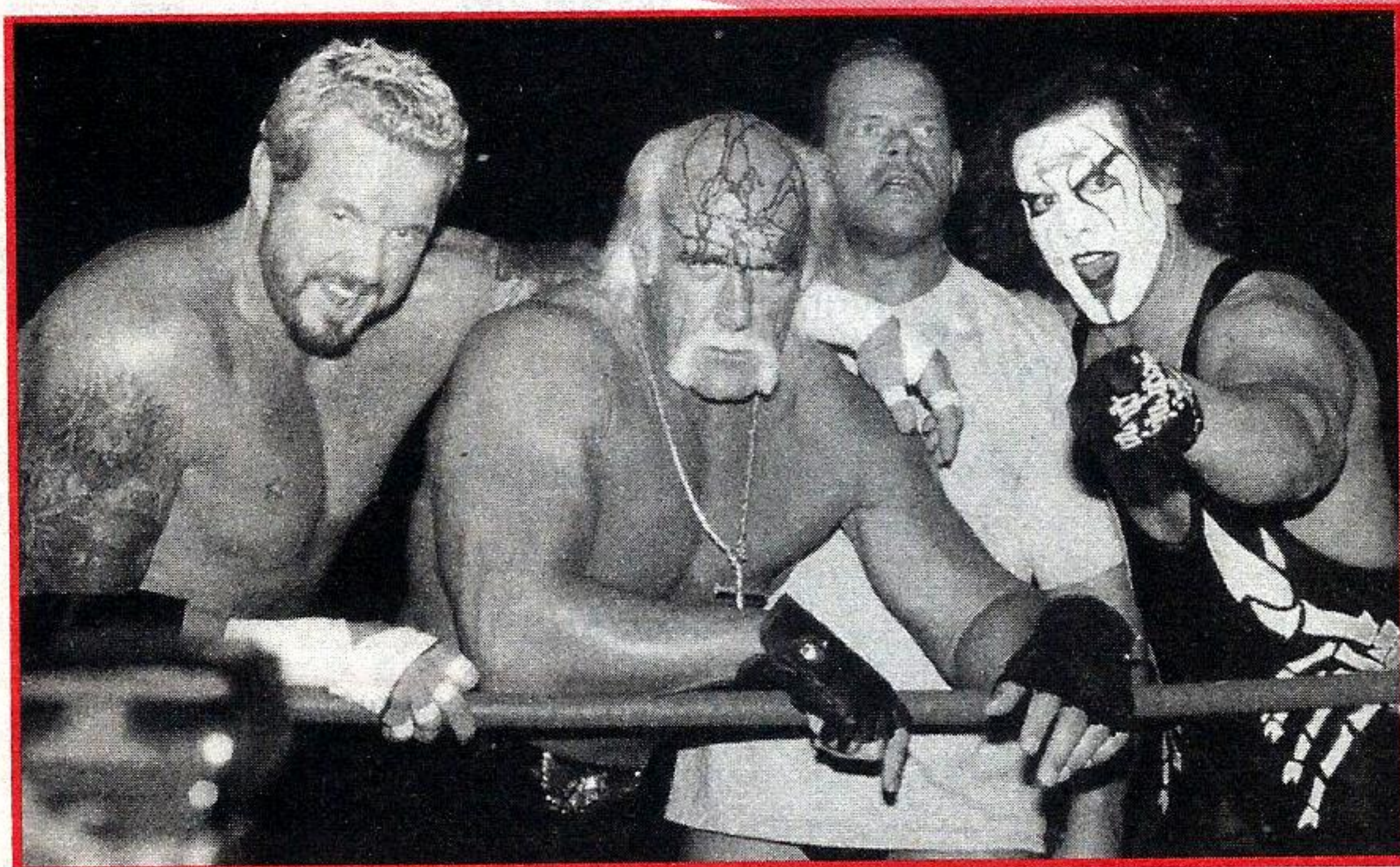
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WHAT'S

Happening

By Dan Murphy



Have we or haven't we seen the last of Hulk Hogan in WCW? Vince Russo would have us believe we have, but others think he'll return as part of yet another version of the NWO, possibly with some of the people seen with him here.

IT LOOKS LIKE **Vince Russo** might succeed where dozens of wrestling's biggest names have failed. On July 9 in Daytona Beach, Russo either killed "Hulkamania" once and for all—or he unwittingly planted the seeds for the formation of yet another NWO.

In a turn of events that drew comparisons to **Vince McMahon's** infamous Montreal screw job of **Bret Hart** at the 1997 Survivor Series, Russo instructed **Jeff Jarrett** to lay down and surrender the WCW World title to Hogan after Hogan and Russo clashed over Hogan's future in WCW.

Hogan angrily placed a boot on Jarrett's chest for a count of three and was awarded the belt. Eventually, all three men stormed back to the dressing room, leaving Daytona fans utterly confused. Later in the night, Russo returned to the ring, verbally trashed Hogan for

not being a team player, declared Jarrett was still the WCW champion, and, in a profanity-laced tirade, vowed that Hogan's tenure in WCW had ended. Russo then said he was rewarding Booker T for "busting his ass for WCW" with a shot against Jarrett later in the night. Booker T made the most of his opportunity, and, after a seesaw battle, won his first world heavyweight title.

Since Bash at the Beach, WCW announcers have not even mentioned Hogan's name. With Hogan out of the picture at least temporarily, many younger WCW wrestlers are celebrating and hoping that Hogan's dismissal will open upper-card spots for them. A few have expressed concern that Hogan's "departure" follows a little too quickly on the heels of the sabbaticals of fellow **Millionaires Club** members "**Diamond**" Dal-

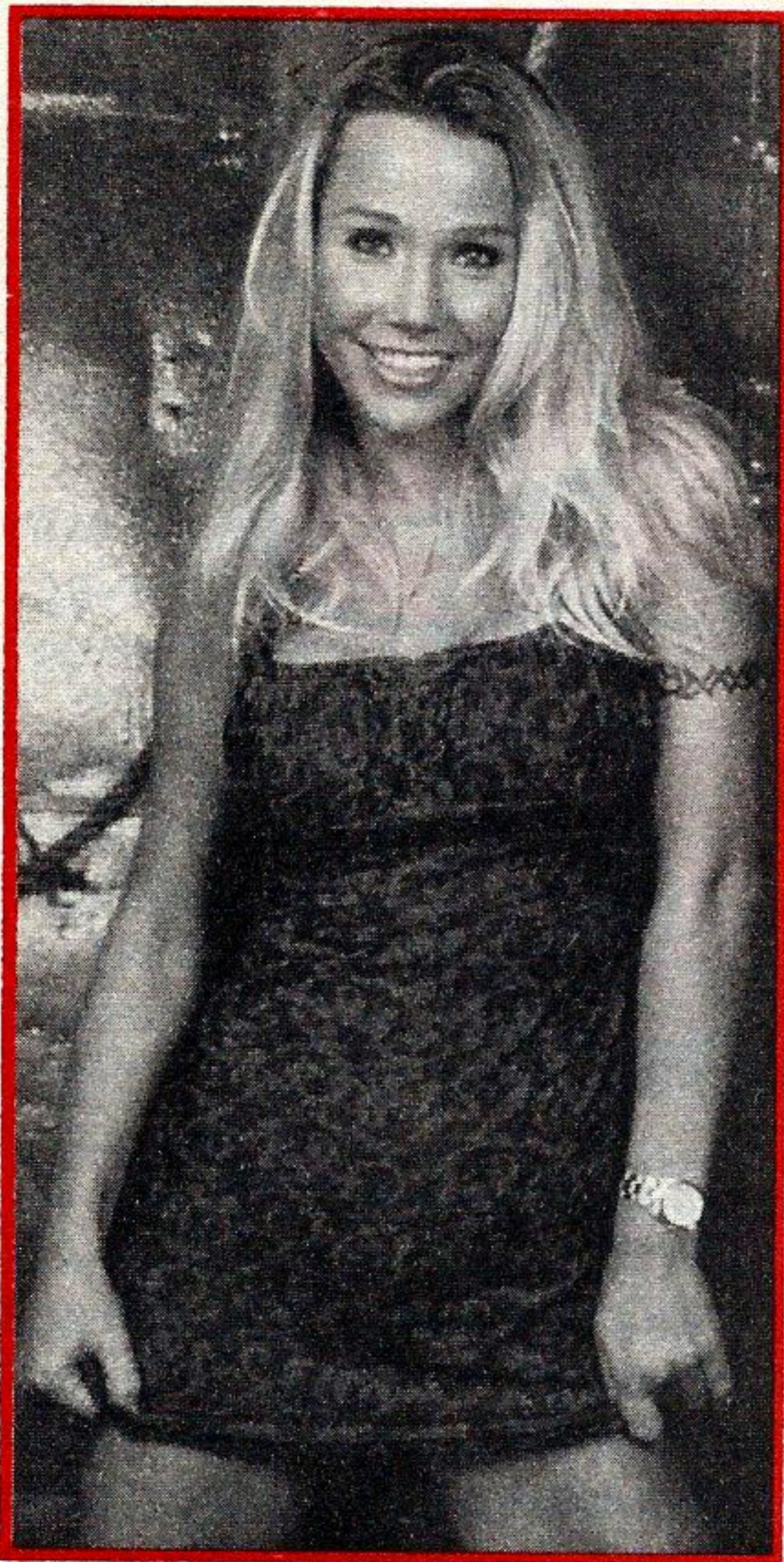
las Page, Sting, Lex Luger, and Scott Hall. If Hogan is indeed rallying the disgruntled troops for another run of the NWO, the **Billy Kidmans**, Booker Ts, and **Filthy Animals** of WCW might find themselves shut out of title contention once again.

How would the fans respond to an NWO reunion tour with Hogan at the helm? And how would Russo defend against an NWO invasion? All I can say is I *do* expect to see Hogan back very soon.

Since Bash at the Beach, Hogan's attitude toward McMahon, his former boss, has noticeably softened. Hogan has talked up Vinnie Mac in a few radio appearances, but McMahon isn't likely to look into re-signing the "Hulkster." NWA President **Howard Brody** might do so, however. Brody has announced his promotion is "rolling out the red carpet" for the "real WCW champion" to "bring wrestling back to the squared circle." In a prepared statement, Brody offered Hogan the chance to burn the WCW title belt in a garbage can at an NWA show in Tampa. Though a Hogan appearance in the NWA seemed unlikely, Brody remained confident.

"Considering the man lives in town and that two of his best friends in **B. Brian Blair** and **Steve Keirn** will be on the card doesn't hurt," Brody said. "But, more importantly than that, this is pro wrestling, remember? And in pro wrestling, anything can happen."

A good example of "anything can happen" in wrestling occurred on July 16 when a contingent from



Kristi Myst was part of a contingent of XPW stars that showed up at ECW's HeatWave pay-per-view in Los Angeles. An ugly incident between XPW and ECW talent took place near the end of the event.

Xtreme Pro Wrestling invaded ECW's HeatWave pay-per-view. Though details remained sketchy at press time, here's what we know:

Several XPW wrestlers, including **Homeless Jimmy**, **Kristi Myst**, **Messiah**, and **Supreme** attended the card, intending to show off XPW T-shirts to advertise the renegade California promotion (which was already involved in a legal battle with ECW). Just prior to the main event (World champ **Justin Credible** vs. **Tommy Dreamer**), Myst allegedly took off her blouse, revealing a bikini top. Francine exchanged words with Myst, and a physical confrontation between the XPW contingent and ECW wrestlers and security ensued, ending in a brief streetfight outside the arena.

In a statement released the following day, XPW claimed that ECW wrestlers targeted XPW

stars with a preplanned attack. Both sides are considering legal action. In my opinion, XPW is entirely to blame. It's not professional to try to interrupt a rival promotion's card in an effort to grab free publicity.

While executing a beautiful top-rope legdrop onto **Terry Funk** outside the ring, **Johnny the Bull** fractured a bone at the end of his pelvis that tore into his urethra, causing internal bleeding. The injury is expected to keep him on the shelf for at least three months, but the fact that Johnny continued on to win the match gives him instant hardcore credibility in my book.

Just the other night, I was watching a tape of "**Beautiful**" **Bobby Eaton** nearly beating **Ric Flair** in a best-of-three falls match from 1991. Eaton wrestled superbly, scoring the first fall after an Alabama jam and nearly scoring a second before injuring his knee and losing the bout. He says coming to ECW has restored the fighting spirit he had on nights like that one. "**C.W. Anderson**, **Swinger**, and **Simon Diamond** think they're

pretty tough guys, but they've stoked the fire burning inside 'Beautiful' Bobby," Eaton said recently. "I'd like to get back to business and see how far I can go here in ECW. With **Roadkill** and **Danny Doring** helping me out, I think I can get a lot done."

Tazz continues to attack everyone who gets in what he calls his path of rage, but **Val Venis** isn't complaining. Venis took advantage of Tazz' interference to beat **Rikishi** for the Intercontinental title. "The Human Wrecking Machine" wants to make a run for either the WWF World or I-C title as soon as his torn triceps is 100 percent. One person wishing Tazz success is none other than old nemesis **Raven**, who should have returned to the WWF by the time you read this. Though he wouldn't talk about his intentions in the WWF when I reached him, Raven had some words for the former ECW World champ.

"If Tazz and I do ever end up meeting in the ring again, I'm hoping he brings a nice gold belt with

(Continued on page 73)

THE BOTTOM LINE *By Ted Smith*

IF KURT ANGLE
HAD A
REGULAR
JOB...

©TED 2K



NO, IT'S NOT
A TIE-TACK
YOU MORON!



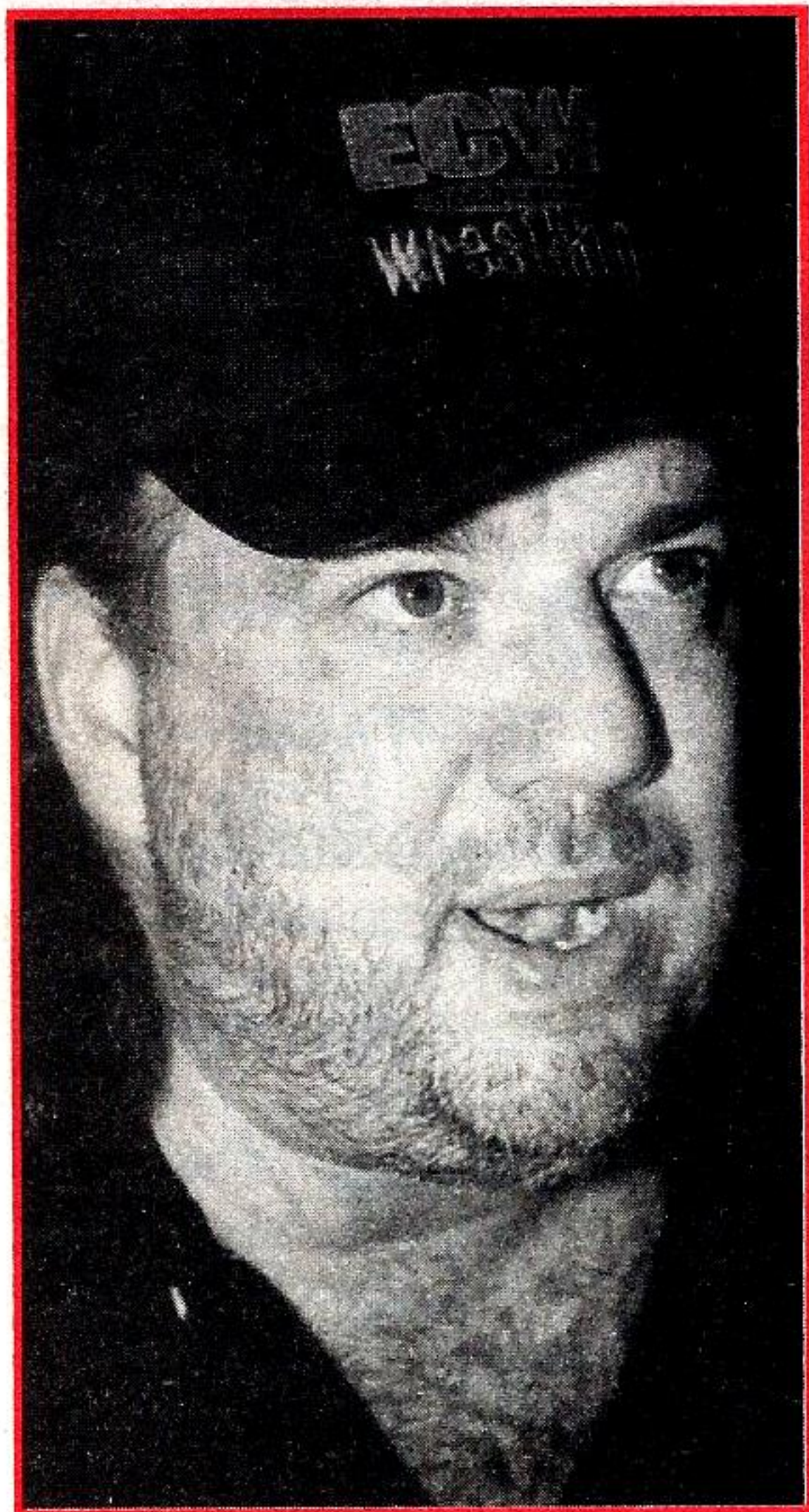
Check out Ted's other wrestling cartoons at wrestletoons.com

NO Holds Barred

with Will
Welsh

IT'S TIME ONCE again to play America's favorite game, *Win Yourself A National Cable Outlet!* with host Wink Martindale.

"Welcome, everyone, to another game of *Win Yourself A National Cable Outlet!* This week, we're bringing back a former *National Cable*



With *ECW On TNN* having been officially canceled by TNN, ECW owner Paul Heyman is looking to land ECW yet another national cable outlet. His fight to get ECW back on national cable television should be interesting.

Outlet champion in Extreme Championship Wrestling. Today, ECW is being represented by its owner, Paul Heyman. Paul, welcome back to *Win Yourself A National Cable Outlet!* It's good to see you again."

"Good to see you, too, Wink. Thanks for having us back."

"Paul, why don't you explain your situation to the viewing audience."

"Certainly, Wink, I'd be glad to. Last year at about this time ..."

"Sorry, Paul, but that's all the time we have for explanations. If you would like to hear why Paul is our first returning champion ever, Paul has ..."

"%\$#@*&!"

"Paul, is something wrong? And remember to watch your language. This is a family-oriented game show, not one of your pay-per-views."

"Listen, Wink, you told me I would get a chance to explain why I'm the only damned person to come back as a returning champion. I think I have a right to say what ..."

"Of course, Paul. And ladies and gentlemen, to hear Paul's comments, log on to win-yourself-a-national-cable-outlet.com. And we'll be back with Paul and ECW after these important messages."

[Cut to commercial]

"You're sending people to a damned Web site to listen to my comments?"

"That we are, Paul. Do you

have a problem with that?"

"Well ..."

"It doesn't matter if you have a problem with that, Paul! *Hah!* I love that guy. Now, if you want ECW to stay national, sit down and compose yourself, because we're back in three ... two ... one ..."

[Back from commercial]

"Welcome back, everyone. It's time to begin the opening round of *Win Yourself A National Cable Outlet!* Paul, what category would you like to begin with?"

"I'll take 'Television,' Wink."

"Okay, Paul, why do viewers watch TV? For the actual shows, or for the 15 minutes—or in the case of your show on TNN—the 20 or more minutes of commercials every hour?"

"What the hell? Listen, you disrespectful #@%#%\$, I'm not going to stand up here and let you denigrate my life's work!"

"Errrrrr! Wrong answer, Paul. The correct answer was 'the actual shows.' And because you picked a wrong answer, Paul, you lose control of the board. The game now goes into random mode until you answer a question correctly."

"No whammies. No whammies. No whammies."

"All right, Paul, the computer has selected, well, it's selected 'Television' again. Ready?"

"Just ask me the !@#%*& ques-

tion, will ya?"

"What do television cameras need in order to record properly?"

"Electricity, Wink."

"Close, Paul, but the judges have ruled against you."

"What do you mean, the judges ruled against me?!"

"Technically, 'electricity' is right, Paul, but they also need

to be able to see what they're

recording. And they can't do that without 'lighting.' The answer we were looking for was 'lighting.' Paul, you forgot that the answer we're looking for is the answer that your company is most deficient in. See, 'tape' would also have been technically correct, but it still wouldn't have been the answer we were looking for."

"Oh, yeah. I forgot about that rule."

"Okay, time to let the computer select the next category."

"No whammies. No whammies. No whammies."

"And the computer has selected 'Common Sense.' Paul, what happens when you antagonize a person or entity that has control of your well-being and livelihood?"

"I think I've learned this one, Wink. You get screwed in the end?"

"Correct! Paul, you're just one question away from landing another national cable outlet! Just remember, the more questions you answer correctly, the more prestigious the network. Would you like to select the next category, Paul?"

"Yes, Wink. Let's try 'Roster Depth.'"

"All right, Paul, here's the question: What has happened to ECW's roster?"

"Wink, can you rephrase the



Not only is Heyman responsible for the well-being of ECW, he is also responsible for the well-being of ECW's wrestlers. And right now, there is nothing more important to them than getting back on national television.

question?"

"Sure, Paul. Why did Mike Awesome, Lance Storm, Sabu, and Tazz abandon ship?"

"What kind of underhanded question is that, Wink? I should take this pedestal and break it over your scrawny head!"

"Judges? Yes, they'll accept that answer! Congratulations, Paul! You've just won another national cable contract! But the excitement doesn't stop here. Keep answering questions correctly and who knows where you might end up! And we'll be right back with Paul's final question after these messages!"

[Cut to commercial]

"What do you mean my final question, Wink? I'm not going to get a very good national cable contract with only three correct answers!"

"Sorry, Paul, but the half-hour is about up. You know, all the commercials."

"Yeah, I sure do know about commercials."

"Don't worry, Paul. If you get this next question right, you're on FX at the very least. And we're back in three ... two ... one ..."

[Back from commercial]

"Welcome back to *Win Yourself A National Cable Outlet!* We're here with ECW owner Paul Heyman, who is on his final question.

Paul, select the category."

"Wink, I'll close out with 'Friend Or Foe.'"

"All right, Paul. Good luck. Here's the question: Who is the one man you never should have trusted?"

"That's easy, Wink. Tod Gordon."

"I'm sorry, Paul, but the answer we were looking for was 'Vince McMahon.'"

"%\$#@&!"*

"Yup, that about sums it up, Paul. But don't fret. You still won ECW a national cable contract, and here's the envelope. Go ahead and open her up!"

"Ohhhhhh, boy. Here we go."

[Heyman rips open the envelope]

"CMT? CMT? What the @%\$# is CMT, Wink?"

"Paul, I'm pleased to announce that as of October, ECW will be the flagship show on Country Music Television!"

"Justin, get out here and start caning Wink."

"Huh?"

"Paul, wake up. It's me, Mom."

"Huh?"

"Come on, Paul. You must have been dreaming. Joey is downstairs in the laundry room waiting to get started on the voicing of the syndicated show."

"%@#@!"

□

By
Harry
Burkett

Booker T is still

DAVE LENKER AND I shared a big laugh the other day. Our phone conversation spanned the usual topics: upcoming stories, why I'm past deadline, Brandi Mankiewicz' latest tirade, the previous night's wrestling shows, and why my answering machine sounds funny.

We were talking about *Monday Nitro*, which had aired the night before, when I broached the subject of Booker T. "Ugh! Where did that G.I. Bro gimmick come from anyway?" I asked. "Even I had forgotten he used that name on the indy circuit, and I'm a wrestling journalist, so how does WCW expect fans to remember that?"

"I don't know," Dave responded. "Booker T's goin' nowhere fast."

"I know what you mean," I said. "Do you remember all those rumors a few weeks ago? Where all those people thought Booker T would be World champion at Starrcade and defend against Bill Goldberg? Did the Booker T fan club start those rumors or what?"

I spit all over the phone as Dave and I guffawed with laughter.

Trying to catch my breath between laughs, I managed to get out: "Maybe WCW will try to cash in on the *Shaft* craze just because Booker T is so good at saying, 'Can you dig it?' Or maybe they'll have Mike Jones come back as 'Mr. Jones' to fight Booker for the right to play *Shaft* when they bring it back to TV. Booker T at Starrcade against Goldberg? Give me a break!"

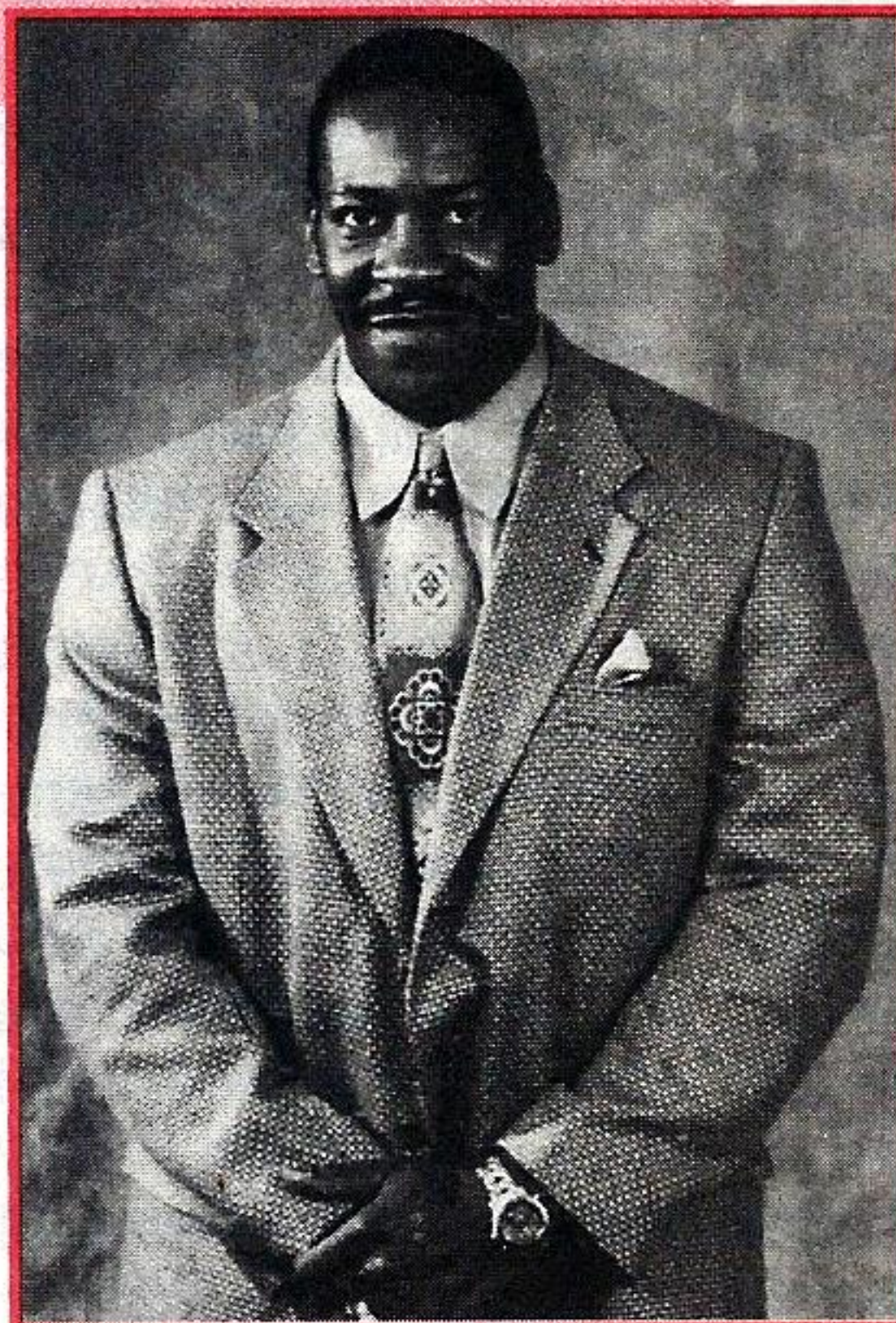
More laughter on both sides of the phone. Booker T as World champion?

The joke was on us. Less than a week later, on July 9, Booker T defeated Jeff Jarrett for the WCW World title during *Bash at the Beach*. Jeff Jarrett had been scheduled to defend against Hulk Hogan and seemingly lost the World title to Hogan at the pay-per-view. Vince Russo later revealed it was his idea for Jarrett to just lay down for Hogan, so he could give the World title belt to Hogan and tell him to get the hell out of WCW. Russo declared the

Jarrett-Hogan title change null and void, then set up a match between Jarrett and Booker T.

Now's the time for me to do some backpedaling. When Dave and I were ridiculing Booker's chances of becoming WCW champion, we weren't belittling his tremendous in-ring talent or the fact that he deserved the belt. We just didn't see how Booker could expect to be WCW champion with Russo and Eric Bischoff in charge, assuming they wanted a more charismatic champion. After all, isn't it all about ratings?

We also assumed the G.I. Bro character signified Russo's desperate attempt to make Booker more interesting. We also assumed that, in terms of credibility with the fans, G.I. Bro had left Booker's title hopes dead on arrival.



Booker T: champion

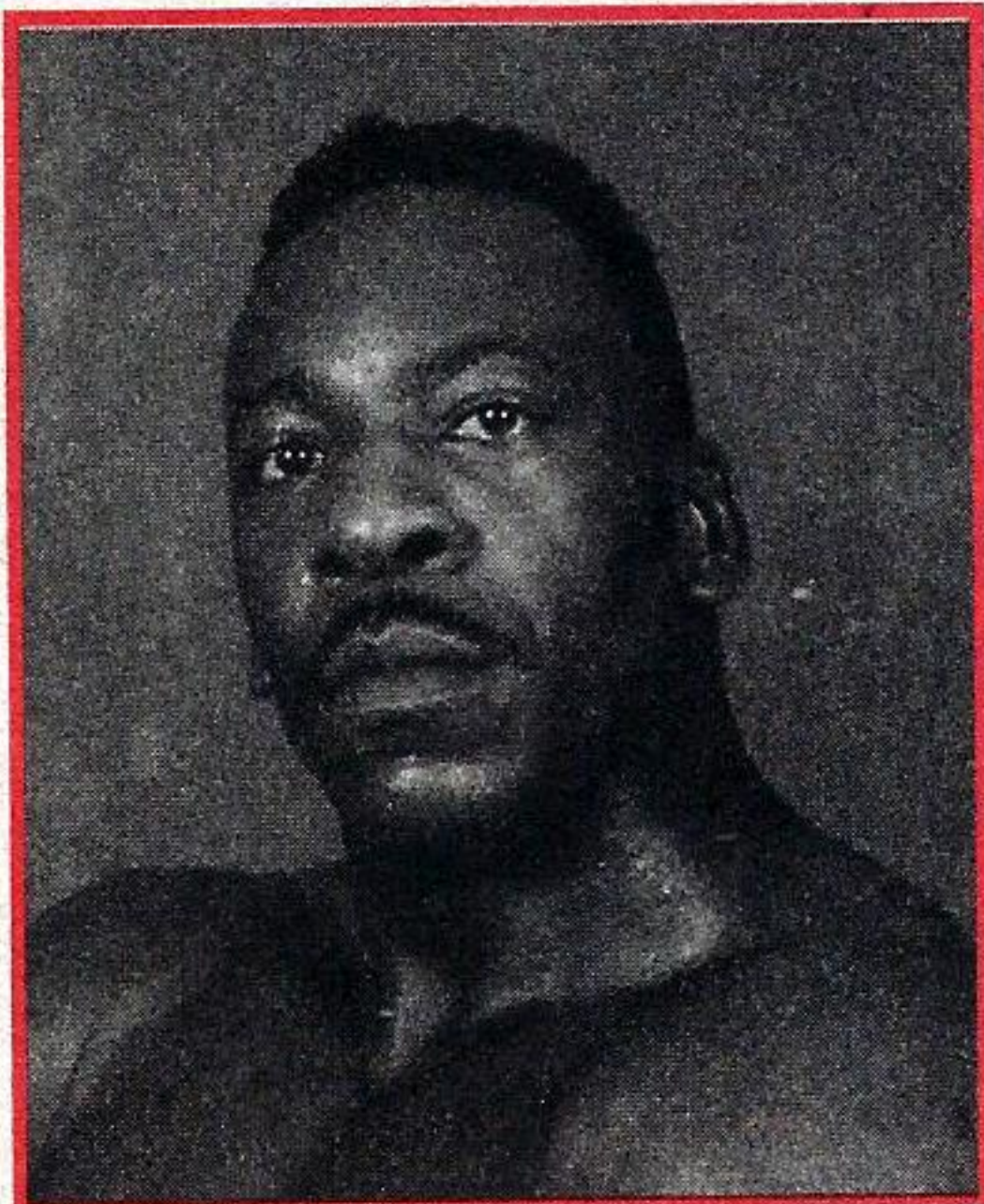
I was wrong about Booker T, Vince Russo, and Eric Bischoff. Russo seriously damaged the World championship during the first six months of 2000. The belt changed hands at least every other week, with Jeff Jarrett squeezing in four title reigns in two months. The worst moment occurred when *Ready To Rumble* star David Arquette, teaming with Dallas Page, won the belt in a tag team match against Jarrett and Eric Bischoff. In fact, Tony Schiavone said titles didn't matter anymore, and it was "all

about personal issues."

Booker T didn't become World champion after months of buildup or as the result of a major push from the front office. He simply pinned the champion fairly, in the middle of the ring. Eleven years of hard work led to that moment. Booker T is a deserving and credible champion. I've become so tired of the WCW belt being used as a prop to revive stagnating careers. I'm glad to see a champion revitalizing the belt for a change. I don't know how long Booker T's reign will last, but I hope it's a long and healthy one.

I don't know about Dave, but I'll never laugh at Booker T again. □

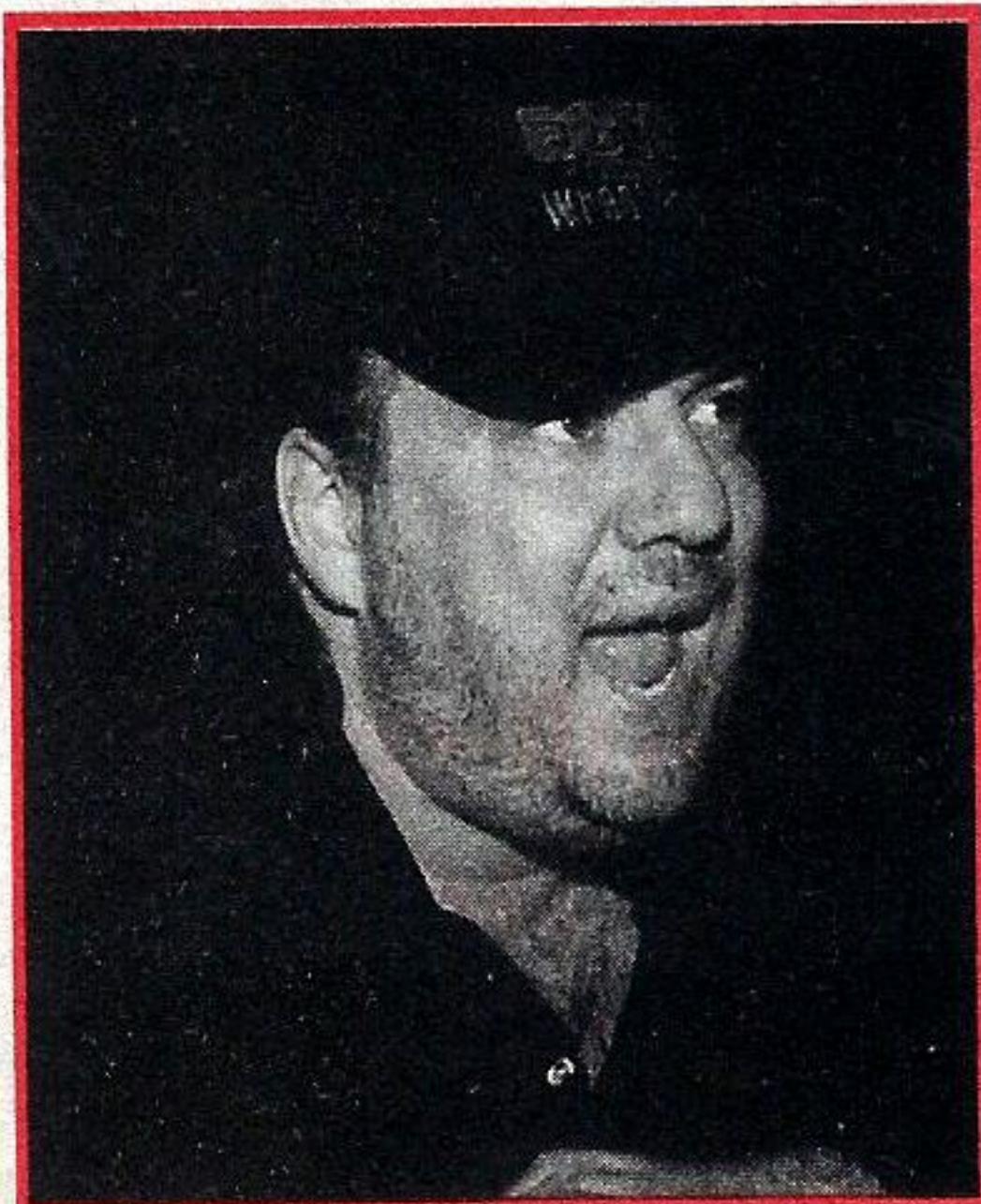
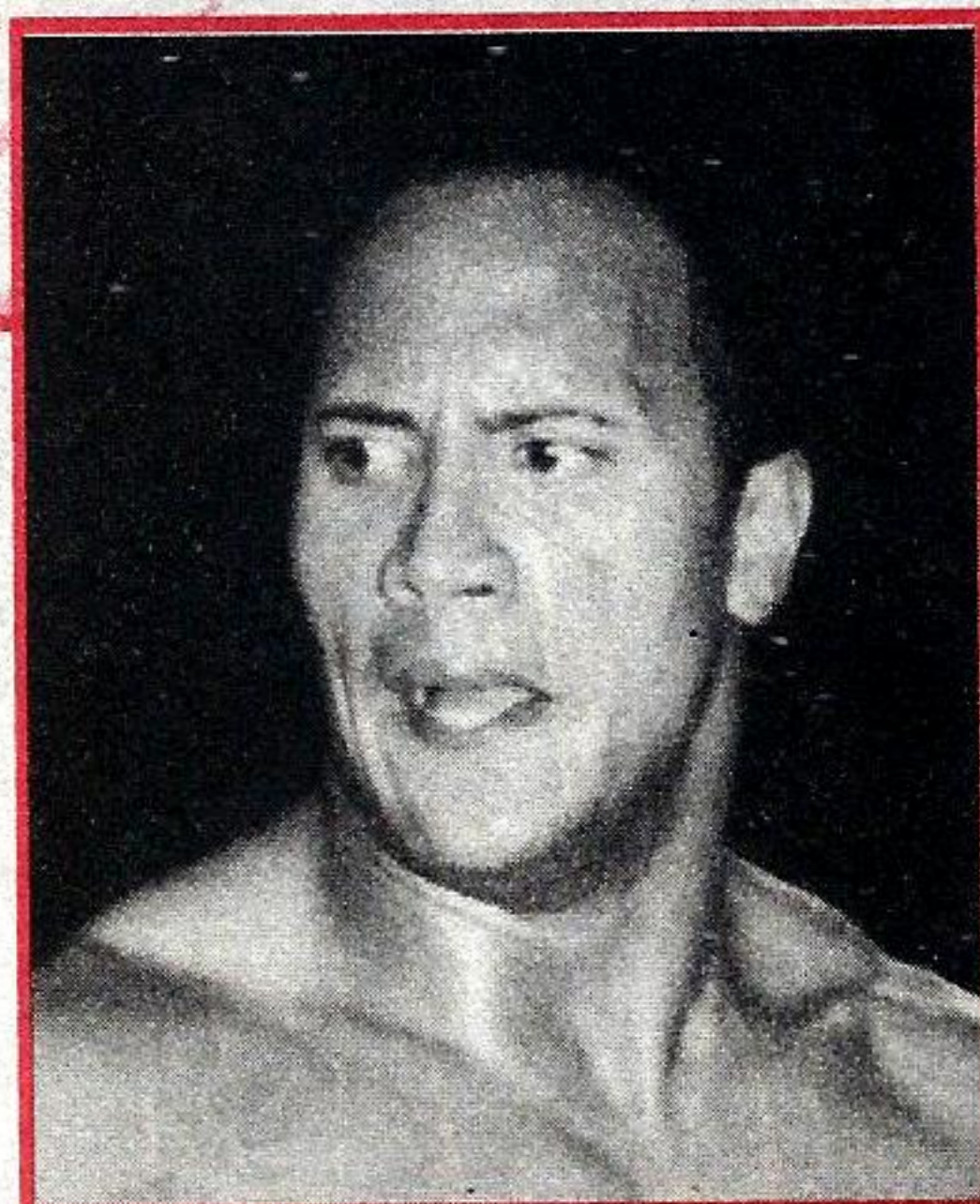
THUMB UP



Thumbs Up to Booker T. We're writing this with the full knowledge that by the time you read this, Booker T most likely will no longer be WCW World champion. That's just the way things are these days in WCW and the WWF, where titles change hands all the time. But that doesn't belittle Booker T's achievement. Being WCW World champion even once, even for a just a day, is something to be proud of. We liked the way Booker T thanked his mother, his wife, and the fans for his success. Know what? We like that Scott Steiner attacked him, too; that way the whole world saw, as they stood side by side, the difference between a real man and a jerk.

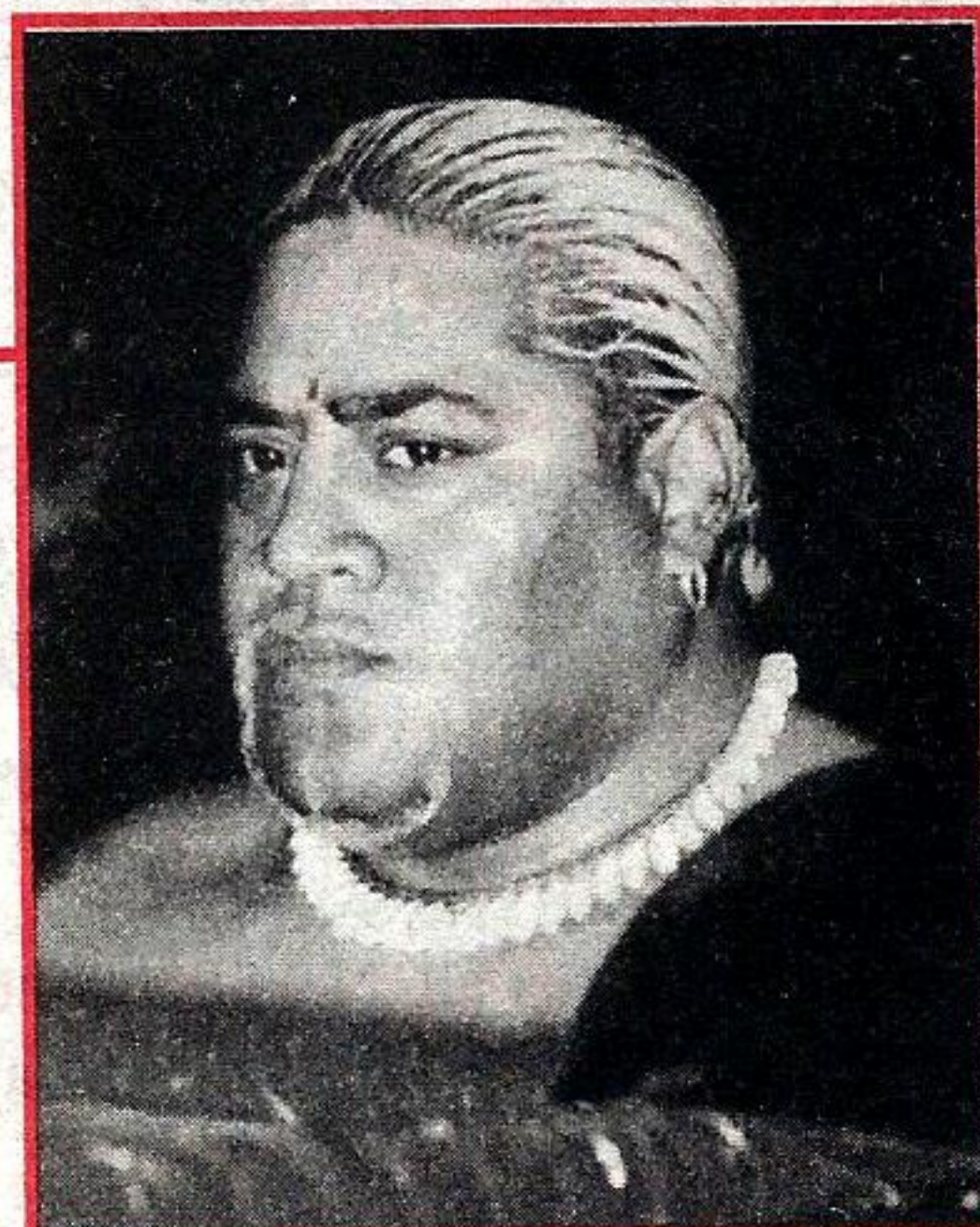
Thumbs Up to The Rock. It's been a long time since we've handed out kudos to the people's champion, which is a shame, because there's no man in the WWF more worthy of our praise. Yes, the way The Rock has carried the federation for the past year has been very impressive, but even more impressive is his absolute refusal to back down from any challenge, any fight, no matter how badly the odds are stacked against him. The Rock never whines. He just deals with his situations

in a brave, manly manner. Ever since he grabbed the baton as the top WWF superstar from Steve Austin, The Rock has been cooking up some great stuff.

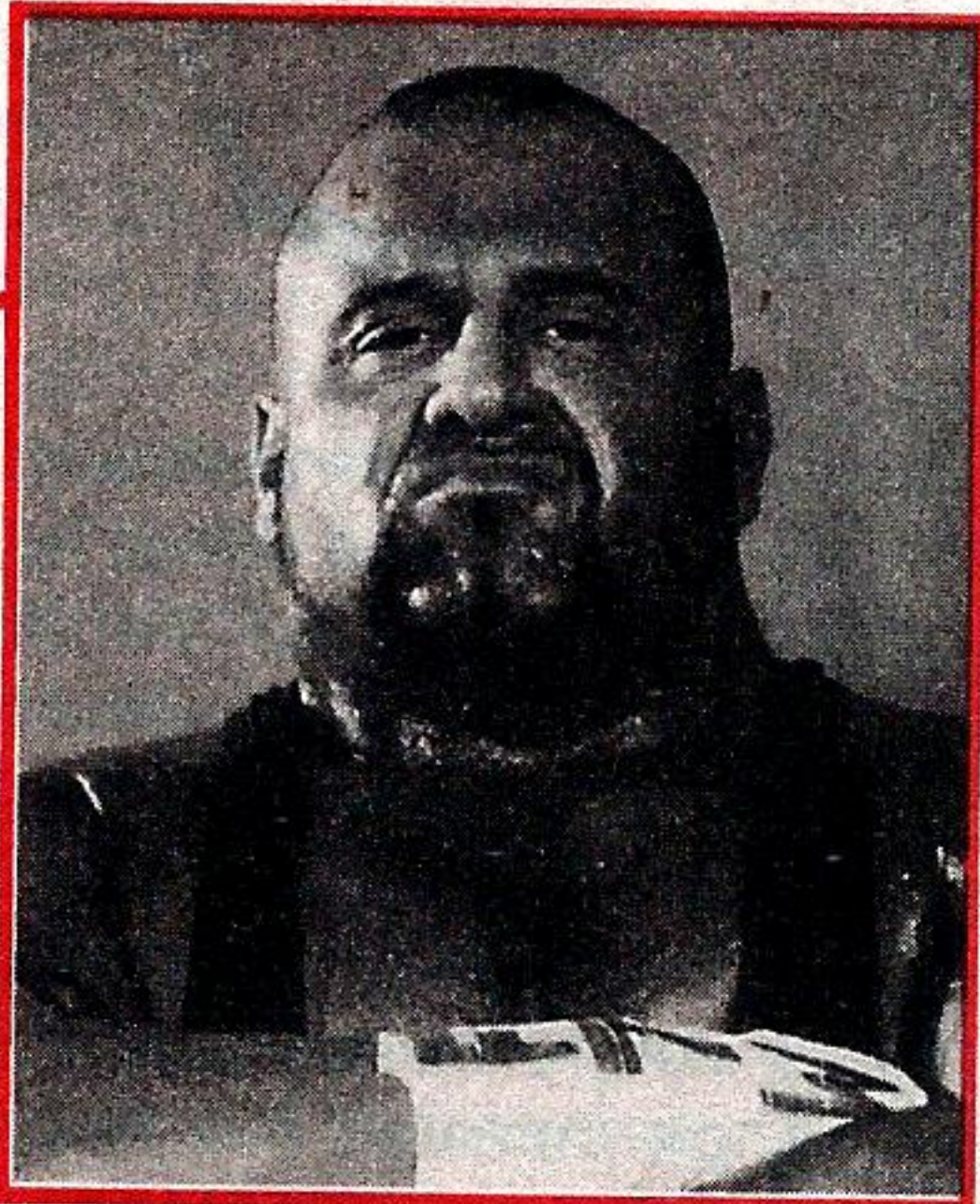


Thumbs Up to Paul Heyman. The ECW executive producer and majority owner received a rare honor when he was listed by *Advertising Age* magazine as one of the 100 best marketers and brand name identifiers in America. The list was for people in business who are exemplary at carving out a niche in their field by creating, marketing, and delivering a unique product that is considered to be at the top of its field. Heyman, an innovator, has taken a small independent federation and turned it into one of the Big Three of American professional wrestling—something no other independent in America has done. Congratulations, Paul.

Thumbs Up to Rikishi Phatu. Just a few months ago, we complained about Rikishi showing too much of his XXXL butt on TV. Well, we still think Rikishi is showing a bit too much, but we also have to give him credit for concentrating a lot more on wrestling these days. The man formerly known as Fatu has established himself as a top singles wrestler, even winning the WWF Intercontinental title, and now seems to want to be known more for his ability than for his posterior. Whether he's teaming with Too Cool or wrestling on his own, Rikishi has become a top wrestling star in the WWF. Way to go.



THUMB **Down**



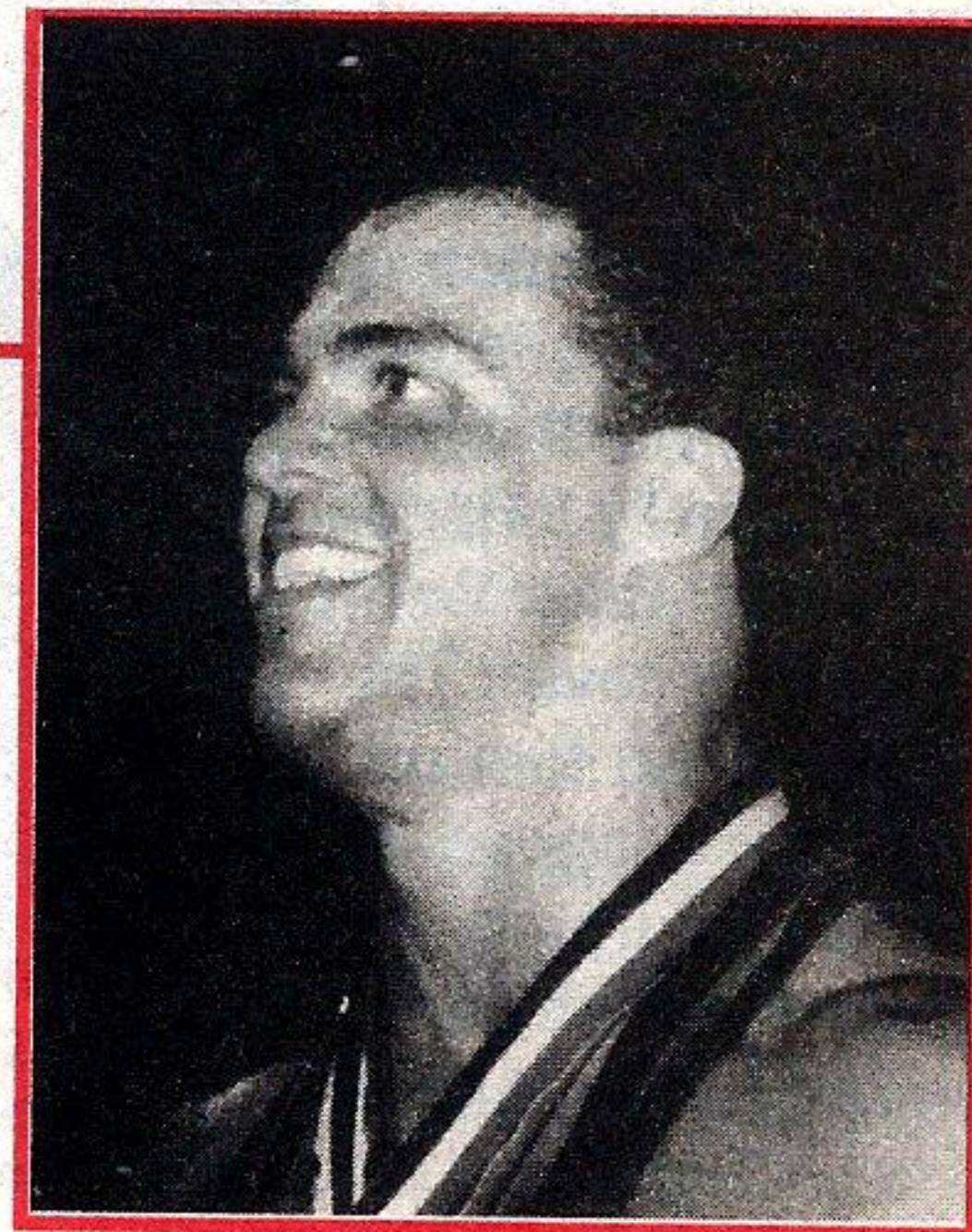
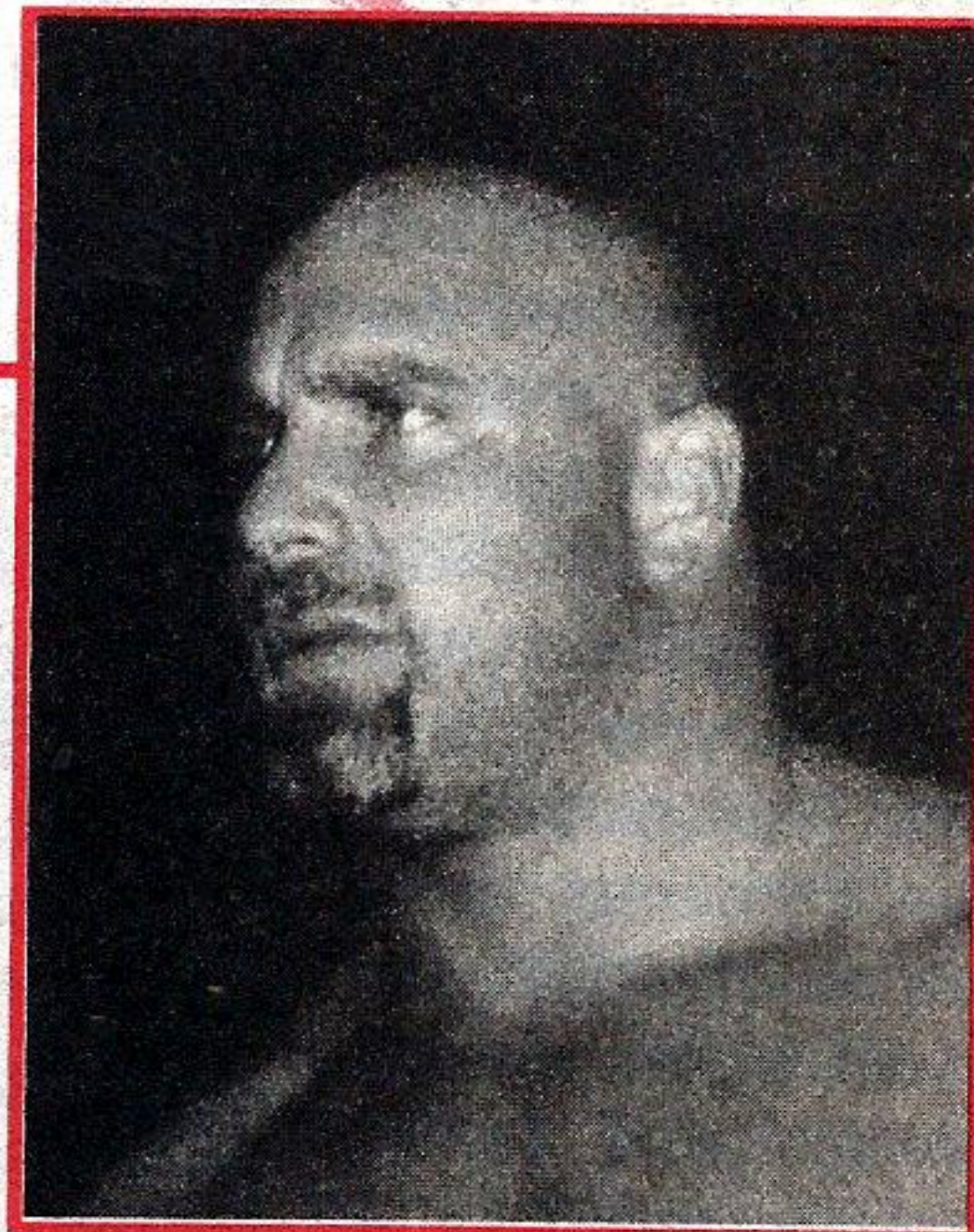
Thumbs Down to Tazz. Why is "The Human Wrecking Machine" acting the way he is? In ECW, Tazz was known as one of the toughest competitors in the world. He didn't need to attack his enemies from behind; he was fully capable of handling them man-to-man. But we've seen a much different Tazz in the WWF recently. For example, at one *Smackdown*, Tazz ran out and blasted Rikishi with a TV camera. His actions resulted in Val Venis winning the Intercontinental title. The list of wrestlers who have been attacked by Tazz is getting longer and longer ... and our respect for him is lessening.

Thumbs Down to Bill Goldberg. And to think we always thought "Da Man" was his own man. Well, it turns out that now he's nothing but a flunky for Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo in The New Blood. What a disappointment for all of those wrestling fans who thought they could rely on Goldberg! What a disappointment for all of us who thought wrestling had its new superhero! Sure, Goldberg's return to action has somewhat energized WCW, but at what cost? Was this the desperate action of a desperate man? Has Goldberg lost all respect for himself? Goldberg, we liked you better when you were on your own.



Thumbs Down to Jasmin St. Claire. The controversial former adult film star deserved a lot of credit for giving up her career on the blue screen to pursue a career in wrestling. Jasmin explained that she didn't want to be just another piece of eye candy (goodness no—ECW has plenty of that). She even trained under former pro wrestler Susan Sexton. But what were we supposed to make of Jasmin's claim that she and The Blue Meanie (now The Blue Boy) would "do a scene" at her beach house for the HeatWave pay-per-view? Whether or not she meant what she seemed to have said, Jasmin was exploiting her past for personal gain. Wasn't she supposed to be beyond that?

Thumbs Down to Kurt Angle. There's nothing we hate more than a hypocrite, and there's no bigger hypocrite in all of wrestling than this Olympic champion. Angle hides behind his fabricated all-American boy image, when he's really nothing but a punk wearing red, white, and blue. We have news for you, Kurt: Your incessant use of weapons would get you banned on the Olympic mats. And your feud with The Undertaker is probably going to hurt you badly. In all honesty, we wouldn't mind seeing that at all. Neither would the fans, who are tired of your nonsense. If you represent America, then America is in trouble.



CORRESPONDENTS

Reports

Boston, MA (Correspondent—Leslie Addison): Though Kurt Angle had won the King of the Ring tournament earlier in the evening, The Rock reclaimed his spot as the WWF's true king of the ring by becoming the WWF World champion. He did so after pinning Vince McMahon in this six-man main event that pitted the team of The Rock, Kane, and The Undertaker against Vince McMahon, Shane McMahon, and Triple-H, who entered the match as the WWF champ. Since any wrestler on Rock's team who scored a pinfall was to be crowned champion, it was basically an every man-for-himself affair.

Kane and Shane O'Mac—the self-proclaimed “Giant Killer”—started the match for their respective teams, and Kane gained the advantage immediately. Later, The Undertaker entered the fray and started beating up the heir to the McMahon family fortune. But when ‘Taker went to make a cover, The Rock pulled him off. This was followed by Kane disturbing yet another Undertaker pinfall attempt, this one on Triple-H.

The match continued this way for the next 10 minutes or so, until Vince McMahon stood over The Rock and began mimicking the people's elbow. But The Rock outsmarted Vince by getting up and driving Vince down to the mat with a Rock bottom and pinning him to become the new WWF World champion.

In other bouts: **King of the**

Ring tournament, quarterfinals: Rikishi Phatu beat Chris Benoit by disqualification ... Val Venis pinned Eddie Guerrero ... Crash Holly defeated Bull Buchanan ... Kurt Angle beat Chris Jericho ...

Semifinals: Rikishi defeated Venis ... Angle beat Holly ...

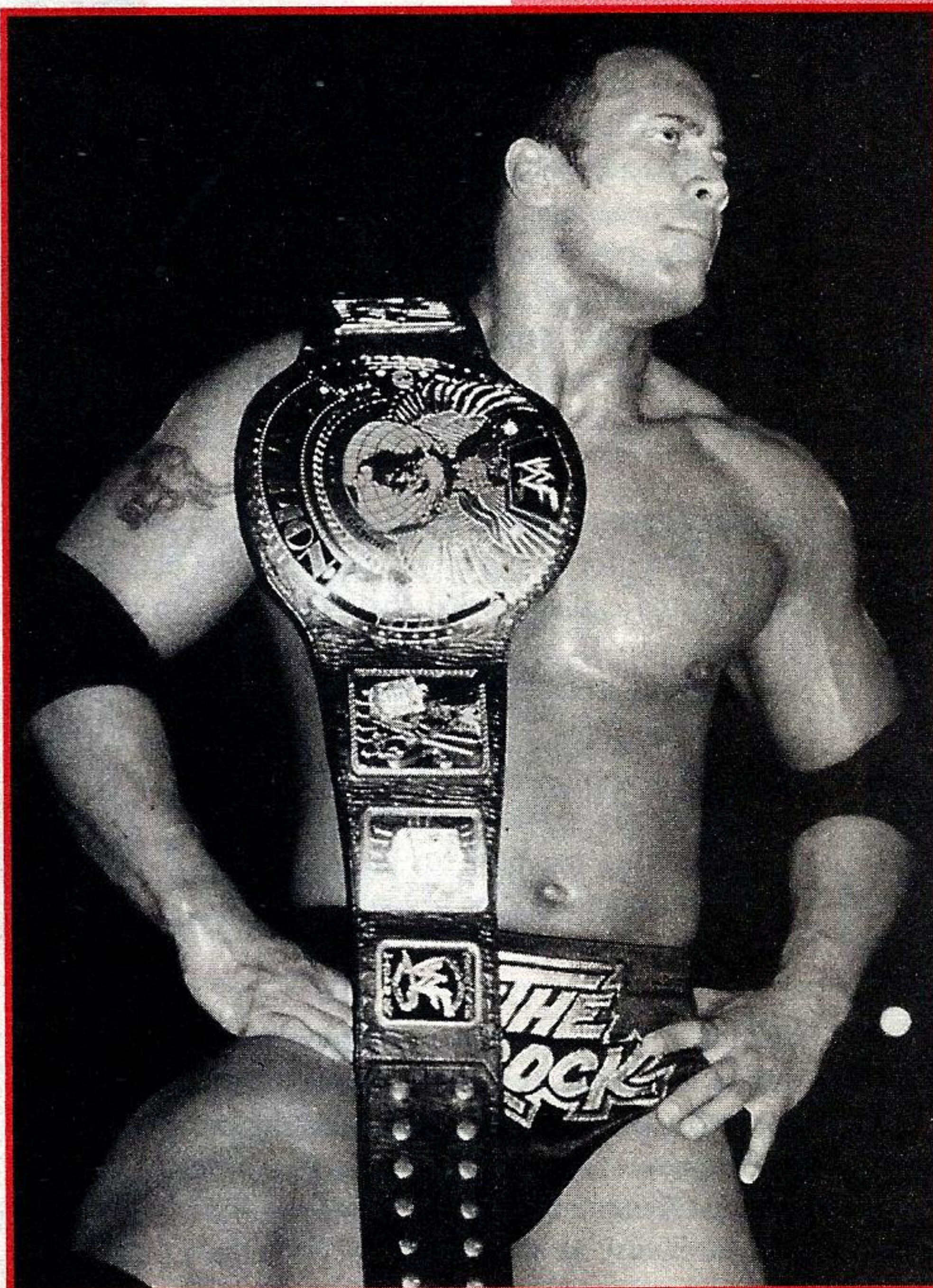
Finals: Angle defeated Rikishi ...

In non-tournament matches:

Edge & Christian beat The Hardy Boyz, Test & Albert, and WWF World tag team champions Too Cool to win the belts in a four-way match ... WWF hardcore champion Pat Patterson and Gerald Brisco fought to a no-contest ... Crash Holly beat Patterson to win the hardcore title ... X-Pac, Road Dogg, and Tori defeated The Dudley Boyz.

Phillipsburg, NJ (Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker): One of the featured matches on this World Xtreme Wrestling card pitted Inferno Kid, managed by Tommy Fierro, against Vladimir Koloff.

Former NWA U.S. and World tag team champion Nikita Koloff was in Vladimir's corner, and despite Nikita's rulebreaking ways of yesteryear, the Phillipsburg crowd gave him a rousing ovation.



Although The Rock did not reclaim the WWF title by defeating then-champ Triple-H at King of the Ring, he did pin Vince McMahon during the pay-per-view's six-man main event to win the title.

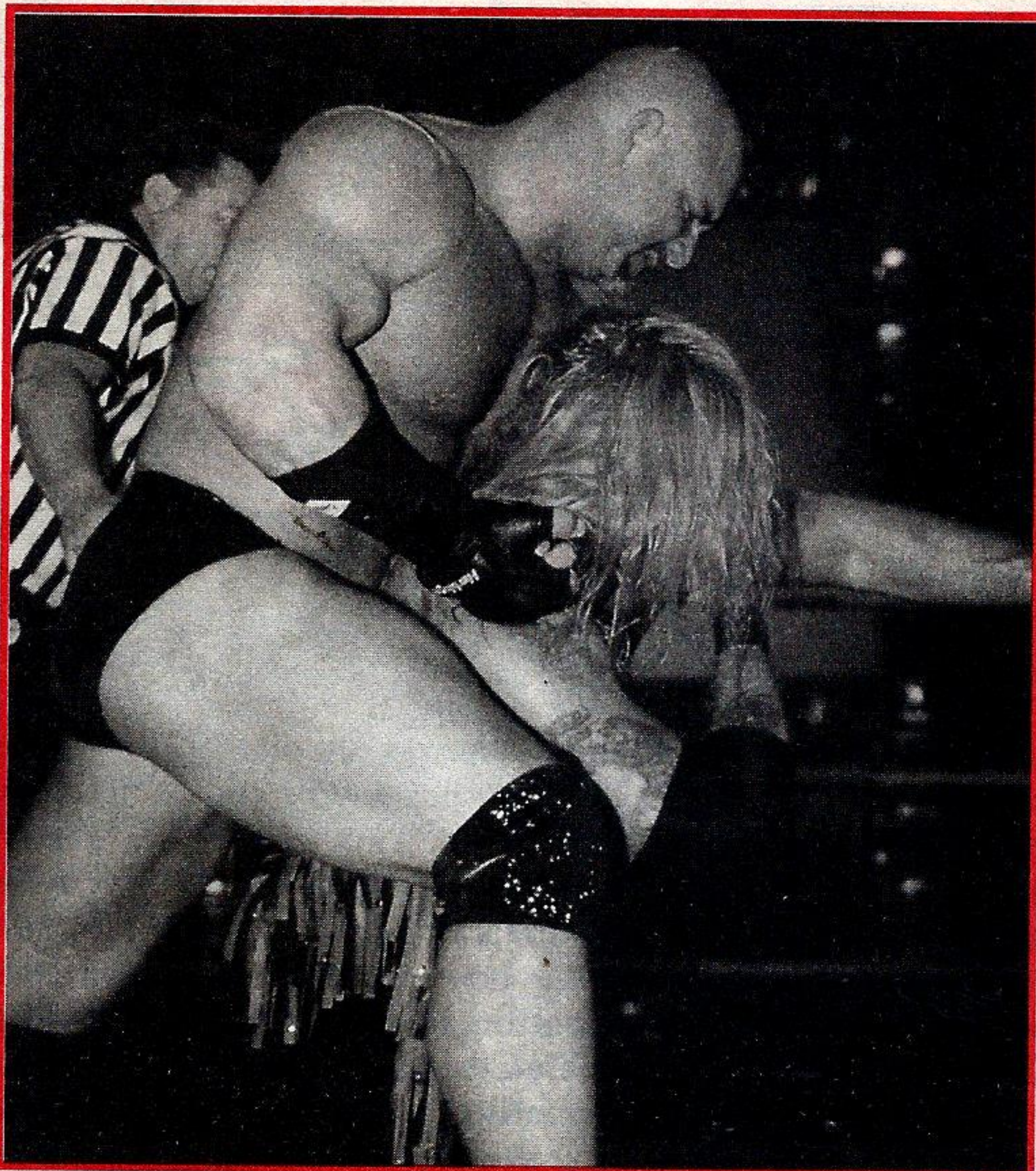
When the match started, Koloff used his weight and strength advantage to toss Inferno almost halfway across the ring. Undaunted, Inferno continued to test his strength against the much stronger Koloff, but he ended up being slung all over the ring. Inferno loudly complained to the referee that Koloff had grabbed his hair, but the referee refused to listen.

At that point, Inferno and Fierro shifted gears. As Fierro distracted the ref, Inferno choked Koloff in the corner. It looked even worse for Koloff when Fierro climbed onto the ring apron and grabbed the big Russian. But as Inferno bounced off the opposite set of ropes, Koloff managed to

break free, and Inferno collided headfirst with his manager. Fierro fell to the floor as Koloff rocked Inferno with a Russian sickle clothesline. With both his foes dispatched, Koloff scored the three-count and the win.

In other bouts: Perfect Creation won a battle royal, last eliminating Eddie Mirenda ... Little Jeannie pinned WXW women's champion Kattria in a non-title match ... Salvatore Bellomo & The Mad Russian beat Judas Young & Ryan Wing ... Zero Gravity beat Shane Black ... Samu & L.A. Smooth defeated "Big" Dick Dudley & The Hungarian Barbarian ... Eddie Mirenda pinned Perfect Creation ... The American Hunk Society beat WXW tag team champions Lucifer Grimm & Afa Jr. to win the title ... WXW heavyweight champion Sugaa beat Moondog Wenzel.

Daytona Beach, FL (Corres-



Bill Goldberg keeps Kevin Nash immobile by cinching in on Nash's head with a powerful headlock. By defeating Nash at Bash at the Beach, Goldberg ensured that Nash's best friend, Scott Hall, would not be returning to WCW.

pondent—Tanis Wesley): The future of Scott Hall weighed heavily on the mind of Kevin Nash going into this match with Bill Goldberg. If Nash won, WCW would reinstate Hall, his best friend. If he lost, Hall's WCW contract would be torn up. So much for a fair playing field.

As the match started, it looked like it would be a war of attrition. Goldberg threw Nash into the corner and began hitting "Big Sexy" with heavy overhand rights. Nash then turned Goldberg in the corner and began weakening "Da Man" with a series of vicious elbowsmashes. Goldberg escaped, however, and nearly leveled Nash with a devastating side kick. Nash, running on instinct alone, defended himself the only way he knew how: with his offense. Nash grabbed the throat of Goldberg and flattened him with a thunderous choke-slam.

Right then, Scott Steiner and Midajah started making their way to the ring. Steiner offered his support to Nash, but when Nash side-stepped a Goldberg spear attempt, Steiner entered the ring and started pounding on Nash, his former NWO brother. Moments later, Goldberg speared and jackhammered Nash en route to victory. As Nash lay unconscious in the middle of the ring, Goldberg ripped up Hall's contract and tossed it around like confetti.

In other bouts: WCW cruiserweight champion Lt. Loco beat Juventud Guerrera ... WCW hardcore champ

Big Vito defeated Ralphus & Norman Smiley in a handicap match ... Daffney beat Miss Hancock in a wedding gown match ... Kronik defeated WCW World tag team champs Shawn Stasiak & Chuck Palumbo to win the belts ... Chris Canyon beat Booker T ... Mike Awesome beat WCW U.S. champ Scott Steiner by disqualification ... Vampiro defeated The Demon in a graveyard match ... Shane Douglas beat Buff Bagwell ... Hulk Hogan pinned WCW World champion Jeff Jarrett when Jarrett laid down for Hogan at the urging of WCW creative director Vince Russo ... Booker T pinned WCW World champ Jeff Jarrett for the title. □

**Send your reports to:
CORRESPONDENTS EDITOR,
Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034**

YOU Asked Us

Q: "I would like to ask Kurt Angle if he thinks his actions in the WWF have tarnished his Olympic heroics. Does he think that just because he won a medal, he can get away with breaking the rules and insulting the fans?"—Lynn Dearch, Pennbrook, PA

A: "Lynn, I honestly don't believe that I try to get away with anything, because I honestly don't believe I've ever done anything wrong," Angle explained. "A lot of people accuse me of doing some horrible, nasty things, but I feel that all I do is show people like Chris Jericho, The Undertaker, and The Rock that there is more to winning matches than primping for the crowd. Besides, the crowds should be cheering for me anyway. I am an American hero, a role model, and their King of the Ring for the year 2000. It's true. It's true. If you want to talk about people who tarnished their Olympic glory, need I remind you of Tonya Harding? She showed the

world what she was all about by hiring a hitman to take out her competition. Talk about evil. She's no Stephanie McMahon—that's for sure."

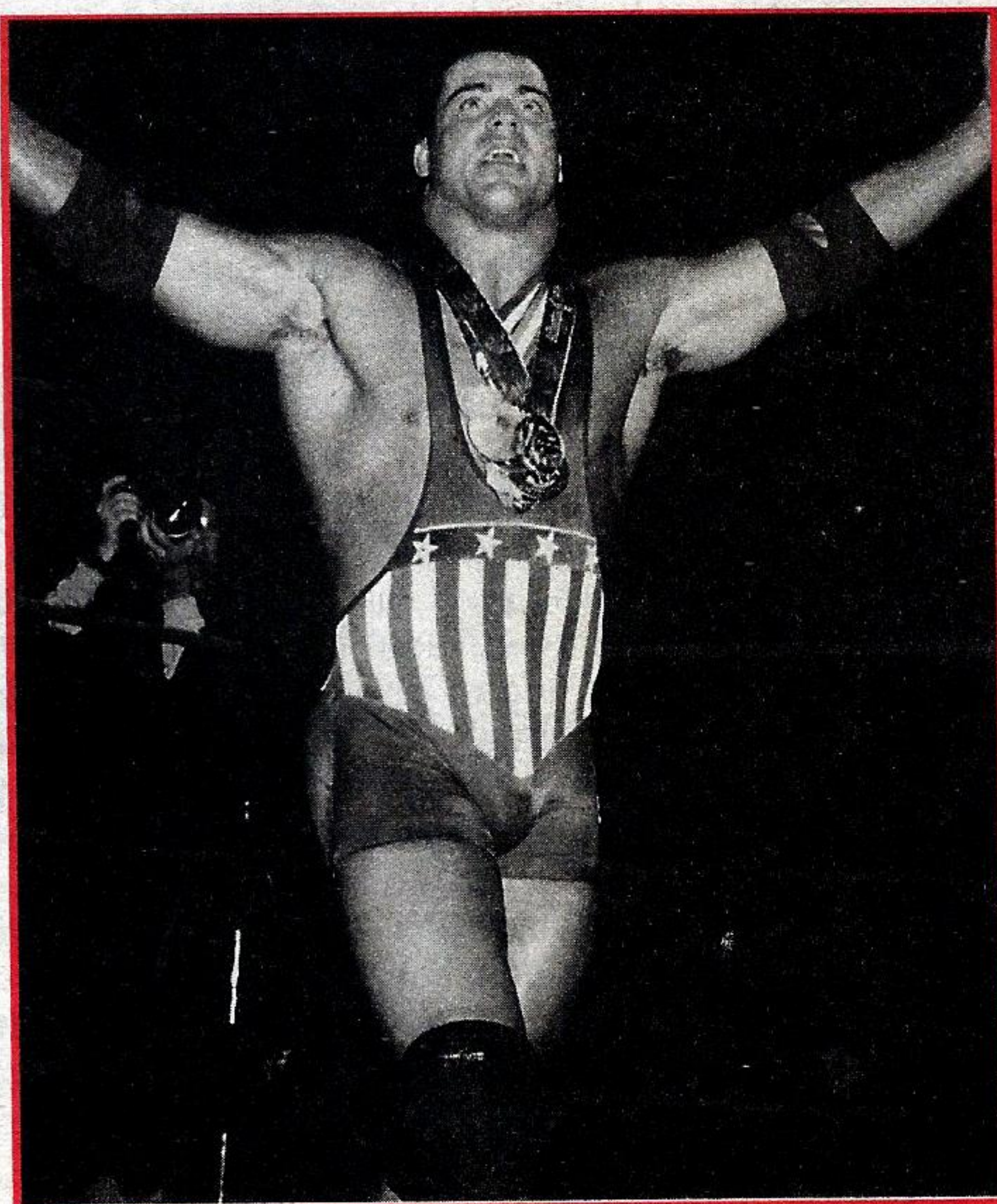
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Q: "My question is for Ernest Miller: Cat, truth be told, you're relatively new to the sport of professional wrestling. Why do you think Eric Bischoff

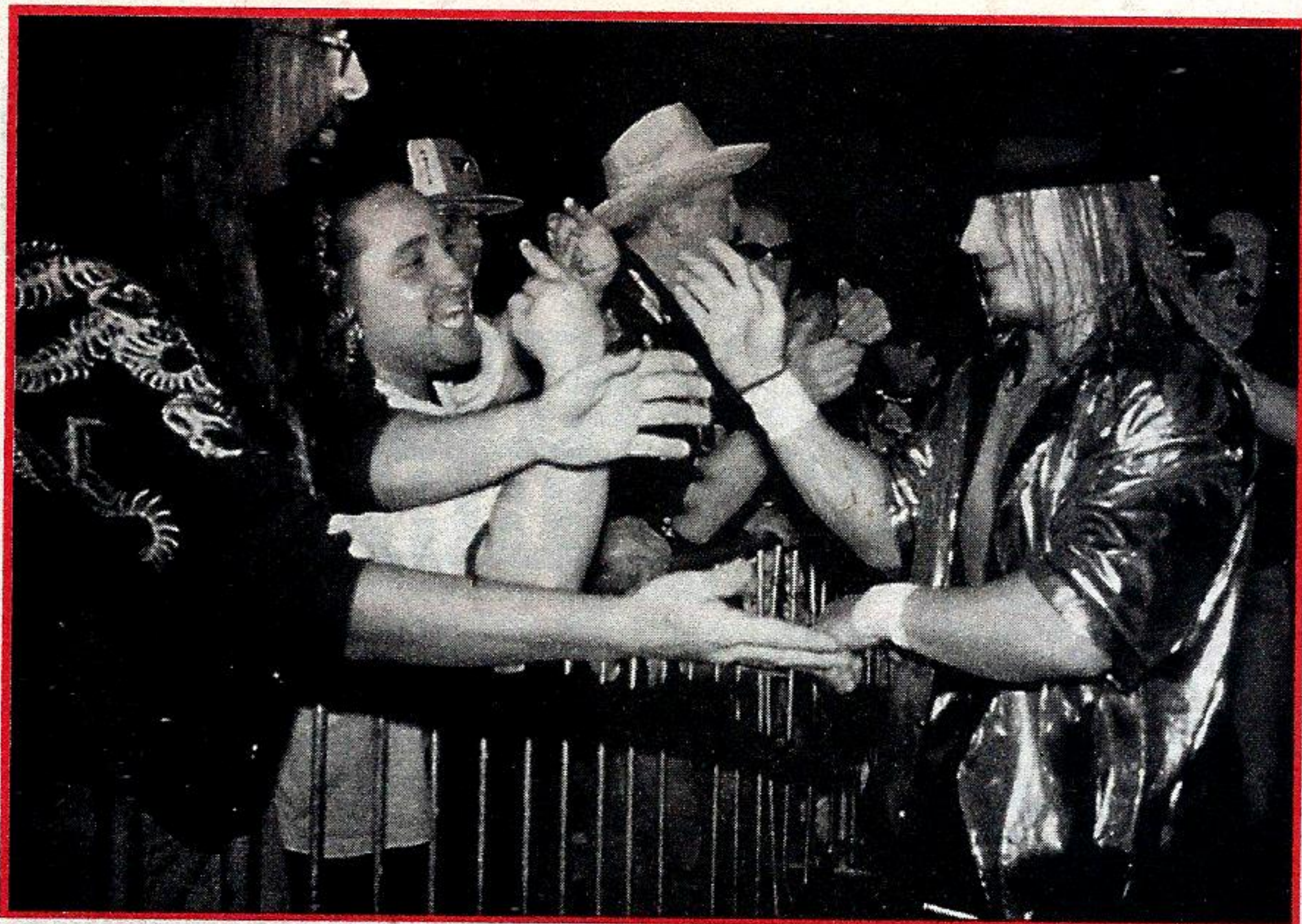
and Vince Russo made you the commissioner of WCW so soon?"—Reginald Motter, Cayots, MD

A: "Listen, Reginald, you don't need to be around this business for very long to know what sells and what don't sell—and I sure as hell know what sells," Miller replied. "I know what draws ratings.

When I make a match, when I'm on TV, people tune in to watch, because they know something interesting is guaranteed to happen. It's guaranteed. They know how great I am in the ring and what great shows I give them. Remember that great Bill Goldberg-Jim Duggan match? That was my idea, and I'm more than happy to take the credit for it, because I deserve it. That was a big night for The New Blood, and it was mostly because of me, the commissioner. Eric and Vince may not say it, but they know it. And because I'm a three-time world



Kurt Angle takes pride in his Olympic accomplishments, and he doesn't understand why WWF fans won't support him. Of course, the obnoxious Angle also believes he hasn't done anything wrong during his WWF tenure.



Kid Kash is an up-and-comer the ECW faithful have gotten solidly behind. When questioned about his recent success, Kash was humble, and gave credit to his opponents.

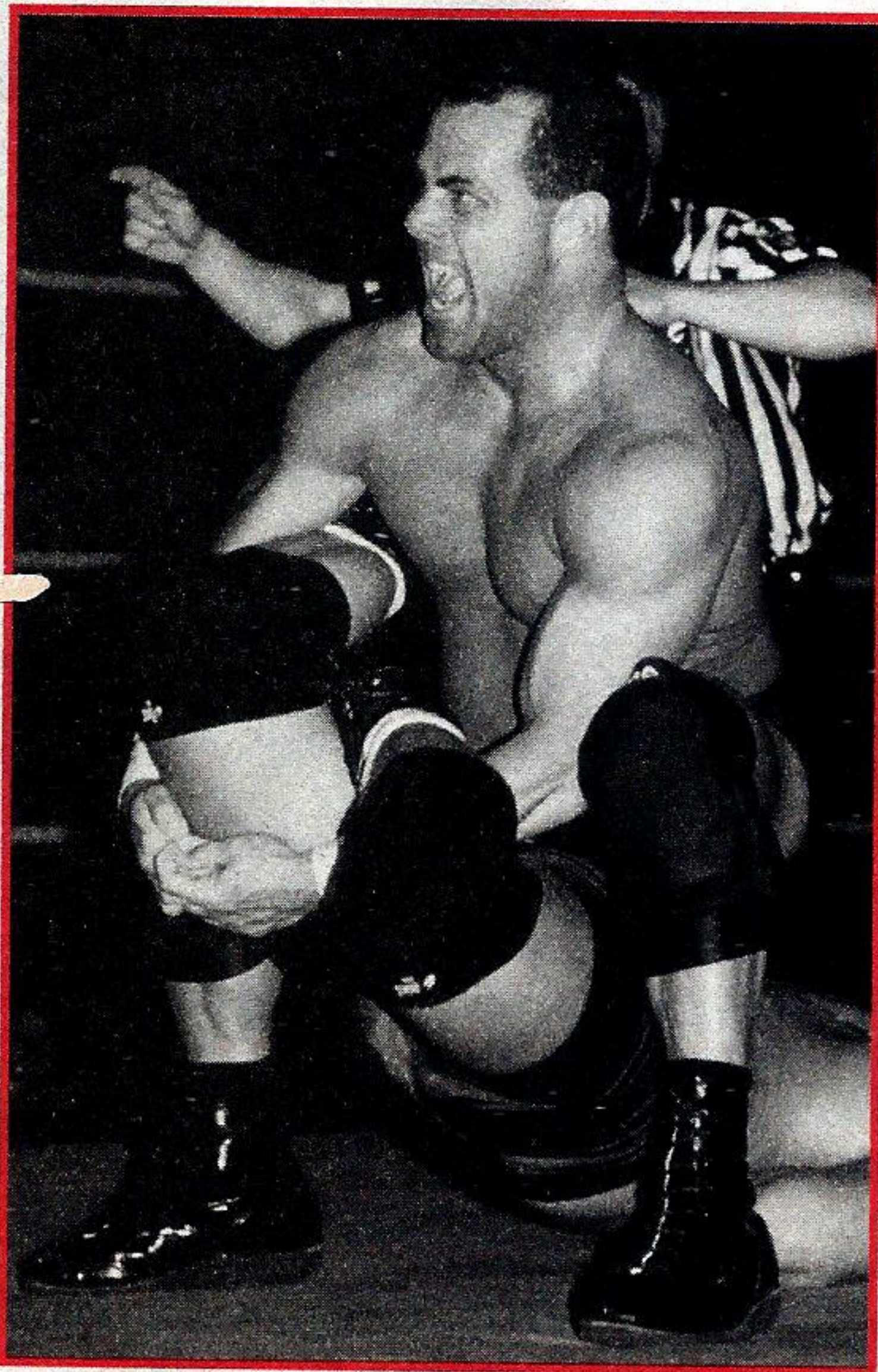
karate champion, Eric and Vince know I can handle myself in that ring. Not like that old man Terry Funk. When he was the commissioner and made himself a match, he always got his ass kicked. That won't happen to me."

...

Q: "I have a question for ECW's Kid Kash. Kid, your win-loss record has really been impressive over the past few months, but all of your wins have come against guys that most people consider mid-carders. When do you think you'll be given the opportunity to show your skills against the top guys in ECW?"—Lou Burlison, Jarrell, TN

A: "Right now, Lou, I'm very comfortable with my position in ECW," Kash said. "And you're right: Lately, I have been lucky enough to put together a solid winning streak. But when you say the streak has come against mid-carders, I don't think you really understand who these people are that I'm wrestling. See, Lou, you

call them mid-carders, but to me, they're the toughest opponents that I've ever faced. Granted, Simon Diamond, C.W. Anderson, Nova, and Little Guido might not be



Throughout his career, Dean Malenko has been known for his tenacity. Now, however, Malenko is starting to garner a seedy reputation by hanging with the likes of The Godfather. He doesn't care about his public image.

main-eventing pay-per-views just yet, but that doesn't mean that they're not top-notch wrestlers. As for when I will challenge ECW's top guys, in some ways, I think I already am doing just that."

...

Q: "My question is for Dean Malenko. Dean, you've been a WCW World tag team champ, a WCW U.S. champ, a four-time former WCW cruiserweight champ, and you're the current WWF light heavyweight champion. In 1997, you were ranked number one in the 'PWI 500.' Why have you aligned with The Godfather? Are you taking your wrestling less seriously these days?"—Bill Sumrall, Bassfield, MS

A: "Just because a guy likes to enjoy his time away from the ring doesn't mean that he's lost his edge, Bill," Malenko tersely replied. "See, I've spent my whole life around wrestling. When I was a kid, I watched my father, the legendary Boris Malenko, wrestle everyone and anyone that came through Florida. I'm a 21-year veteran. All those years, no one ever got to know the man behind the 'Iceman.' Now that they are, a lot of people are shocked by who they have found me to be. I'm a ladies man. But I don't have the time or the patience to worry about what others think of me, including people like Ivory and Jackie. If you look at what I do in the ring, it's what I've been doing for years. That hasn't changed one bit." □

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Introducing

By Dave Rosenbaum

CHARLIE & RUSS HAAS

EVER SINCE THEY were little kids, Charlie and Russ Haas have loved watching pro wrestling on television. Their favorite wrestlers were guys like Rocky Johnson, Jimmy Snuka, Gino Hernandez, Chris Adams, The Road Warriors, Dusty Rhodes, and the Von Erich family—all of the top stars of the 1980s. Growing up in Edmond, Oklahoma, they attended Mid-South and UWF cards as often as they could.

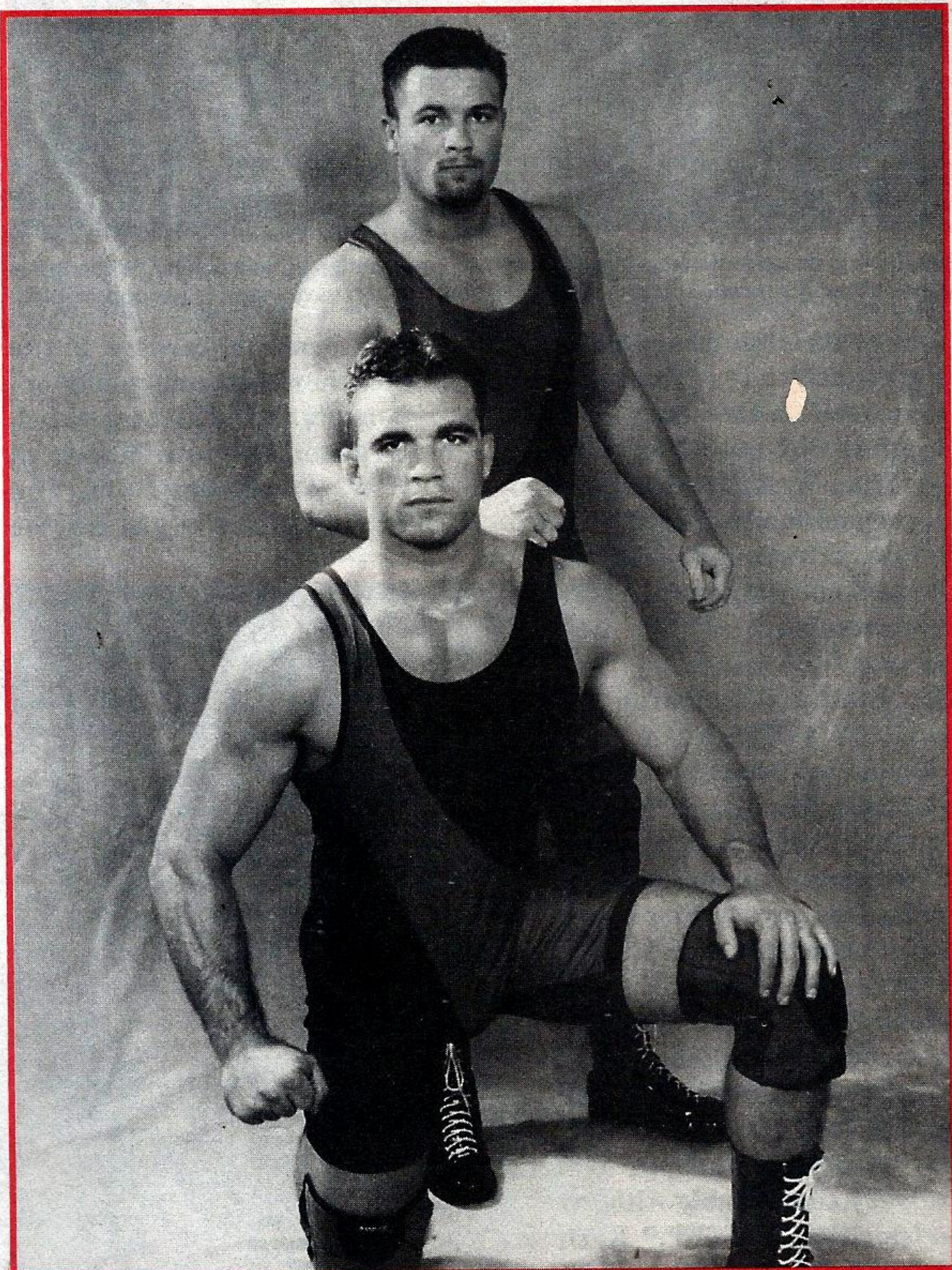
So when Charlie Haas entered seventh grade and found out about the middle school's wrestling team, he was all set to follow in the footsteps of the wrestlers he idolized. Was he in for a big surprise!

"I had no idea there was a difference between pro wrestling and amateur wrestling," Charlie said. "The only thing I had ever seen was professional wrestling. I didn't know a whole lot about this other stuff."

Charlie signed up anyway. So did his brother, Russ, albeit two years later. Before long, the Haas brothers were stars of their junior high school team.

"We started finding out about how many professional wrestlers began their careers as amateurs," Russ said. "We figured it couldn't hurt to know the basics. But we always had our sights set on becoming professionals one day."

That day has finally arrived for them. The Haas brothers have already won tag team championships in the ECWA, Jersey All-Pro Wrestling, Combat Zone Wrestling, and a few other inde-



At first, Russ and Charlie Haas didn't know the difference between pro wrestling and amateur wrestling. Now they're showing the world the difference between pro wrestling and Haas-style wrestling

pendent promotions. But like the young kids who always had their sights set on becoming pros, Charlie and Russ now have their sights firmly set on making it to the big time: the WWF, WCW, or ECW.

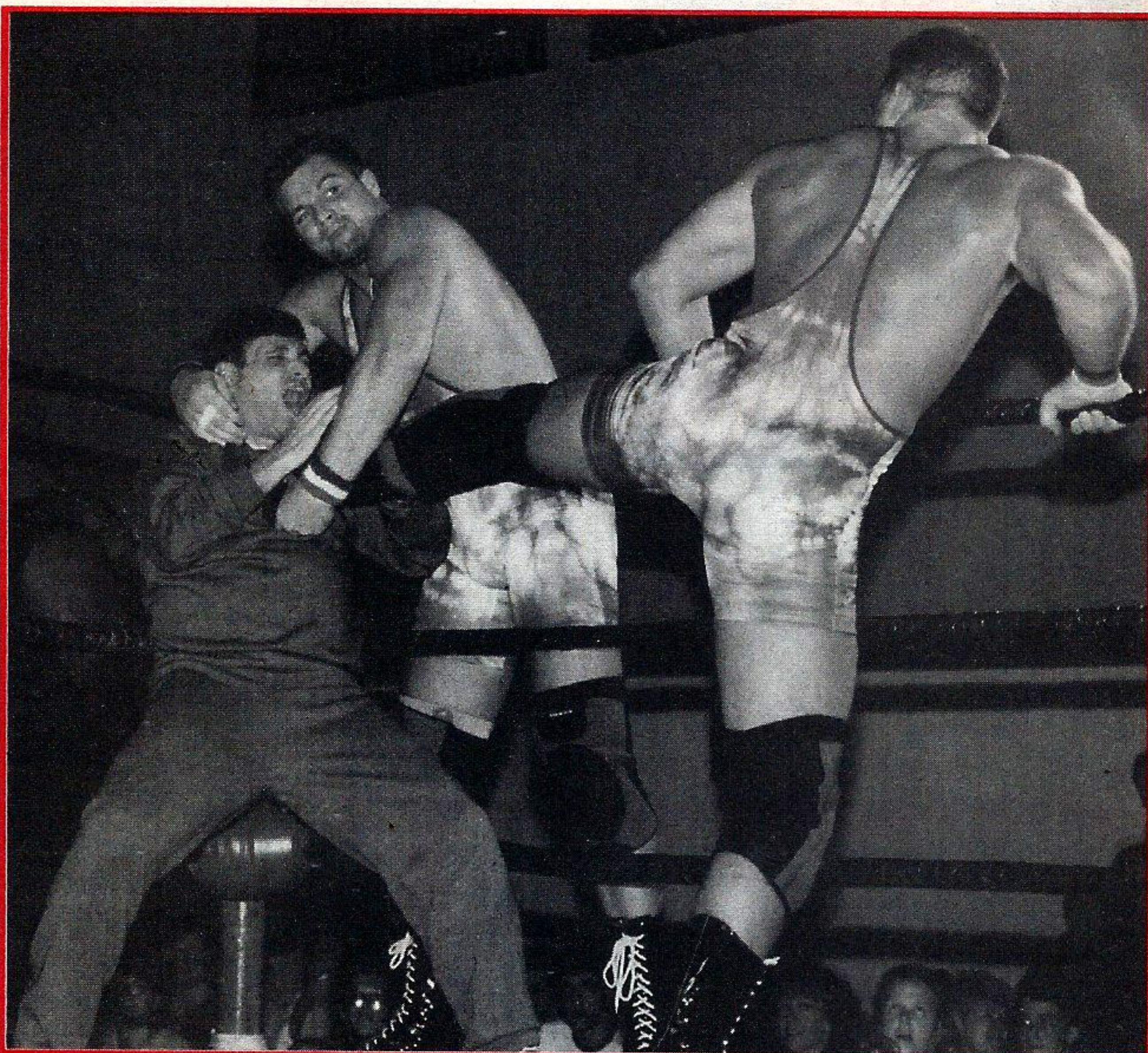
"That's what it's all about," Charlie said. "We want to make it as a team, not as singles, in whatever promotion gives us the best opportunity to show that we are one of the greatest teams of all-time. We're talking about being on a level with The Steiners, The Rock 'n' Roll Express, The Road Warriors ... you know, the greatest teams ever. That's what we're gonna be."

The Haas brothers certainly have the background to become stars. Charlie is 28. Russ is 26. Both are 6'2"; at 235 pounds, Charlie is 15 pounds heavier than Russ. Both starred in high school for the Oklahoma state champion Edmond Bulldogs. Both were members of the Oklahoma Junior National Freestyle wrestling team and trained under Olympic gold medal winner John Smith and national champion Greg Oplotnik. Both were scholarship wrestlers at Division I Seton Hall University.

And both were trained for their pro careers by "Iron" Mike Sharpe and ECWA promoter Jim Kettner, a man they are now battling against.

"These guys have the goods," Sharpe said. "They know their way around the mat as well as any wrestlers in the sport, and I'm talking about any wrestler, and they know how to think on the run. The fans are going to find out quickly that no team is as innovative and makes adjustments quicker than the Haas brothers. I don't see how they *can't* make it big."

Although Charlie and Russ fol-



Though the Haas brothers are fine technical wrestlers, they are known to violate the rulebook on occasion. ECWA promoter Jim Kettner thought he'd be safe entering the ring against the siblings. He thought wrong.

lowed identical paths to the pro ranks, they aren't alike in every way. Charlie, a fine technical wrestler, relies mostly on power moves. Russ, who has a background as a gymnast, is more of a finesse wrestler who throws in a lot of aerial moves. Charlie is more talkative. Russ prefers to stay in the background and let his older brother tell the world how great the Haas brothers are about to become. Charlie's the one who usually invites opponents into the brothers' "Haas of pain."

"Listen, we were great high school athletes, we were great college athletes, and now we're great pro athletes," Charlie said. "We have everything in the world going for us."

Despite their reliance on amateur-type moves, the arrogant Haas brothers have developed a crowd-pleasing style. They had one particularly outstanding match against Joey Matthews and Chris-

tian York in Northeast Wrestling. The match lasted about 20 minutes, and the fans were never bored. Maybe that's because the brothers keep on coming up with new moves, such as the Haas-truction and the H-bomb, in which Russ slingshots his opponent into Charlie, who immediately executes an overhead suplex. In the Haas cracker, one brother does a split on an opponent, while the other brother crashes down with an elbow to the groin.

"Innovation is what it's all about," Charlie said. "You can't counter what you've never seen before. As soon as our opponents come up with counters for what we're doing now, they're going to have to deal with a whole different set of moves. Nobody's going to be able to keep up with us."

The Haas brothers have set high standards for themselves ... and for their opponents. They know exactly what pro wrestling is all about. □

Q

THE UNDERTAKER

A



IF THERE'S ONE overwhelming character trait about The Undertaker, it's this: He refuses to go away. He's been burned, buried, and destroyed by opponents, but he's never been gone for long. So last fall, when The Undertaker was sidelined with an assortment of injuries, fans were pretty confident he'd be back. After all, the WWF isn't as **hell-acious** when he's not around.

But The Undertaker who returned to the ring at Judgment Day was not really the same Undertaker we had come to know and fear. He rode to the ring on a motorcycle during the match between The Rock and Triple-H and started a war with Helmsley by choke-slammng and piledriving the then-WWF champ. Of course, his actions did cost The Rock the WWF title, but the two managed to put aside their differences. It wasn't long before they had joined forces against the McMahon-Helmsley Faction.

At King of the Ring, The Undertaker, Kane, and The Rock battled Triple-H, Shane McMahon, and Vince McMahon with the stipulation that if any member of The Undertaker's team pinned any member of the McMahon-Helmsley team, that person would win the WWF World title. First, Kane stopped The Rock from winning. Then Undertaker broke up a pin attempt. Finally, The Rock Rock-bottomed Vince and won the World title. Since then, Undertaker and Kane have turned their focus toward Edge and Christian, the WWF World tag team champions. So much for the Canadians.

The new Undertaker is less mysterious than the old Undertaker. This Undertaker is a good ol' boy who likes to kick butt. The old Undertaker ruled by intimidation. Both versions of The Undertaker have captured the fans' attention, which is why we sent Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum to speak with our favorite dead man.

Q: I think a lot of people at Judgment Day were shocked by the way you changed. You're just as tough as you used to be, but you're a lot less mysterious and more approachable. Why the change?

A: It's all right to be different and stand up for what you believe in. I'm not trying to let down the old-school Undertaker fans, but it was time for a change. Sometimes you just get tired of doing things the old way. I guess you could say that's what happened to me. Besides, I like the idea of driving my motorcycle to the ring.

Q: They don't have motorcycles in the great beyond, do they?

A: I wouldn't know.

Q: Well, that's a change. Another change is that you no longer have manager Paul Bearer at your side. Is it safe to say that we've seen the last of Bearer with The Undertaker?

A: I'm not gonna say that. You never know what's going to happen. The fact is, though, that Paul Bearer and The Undertaker have moved in opposite directions. Paul used to be my link to the public, but now I'm a lot more talkative, so Paul got pushed to the side. You could say I don't need him anymore. Paul's been in the business for about 20 years, and he has a lot to offer to young talent who need help and training. Maybe before it's all said and done, we might hook it up one more time. Who knows.

Q: How did you keep busy during all your months away from the ring?

A: Well, there was plenty to do. Get back in shape. A lot of working out. Thinking about what I wanted to do in the future. Spent a lot of time riding my bikes. You know, over the past few years, I've had a couple of major injuries, so they needed some time to heal. But injuries come with wrestling. That's just something I'm going to have to deal with. When you're a kick-ass wrestler, you're gonna get yourself hurt once in a while.

Q: You've had a long history with Kane. Now you're wrestling side-by-side again. How does that feel?

A: I like working with Kane. He still hasn't scratched his poten-

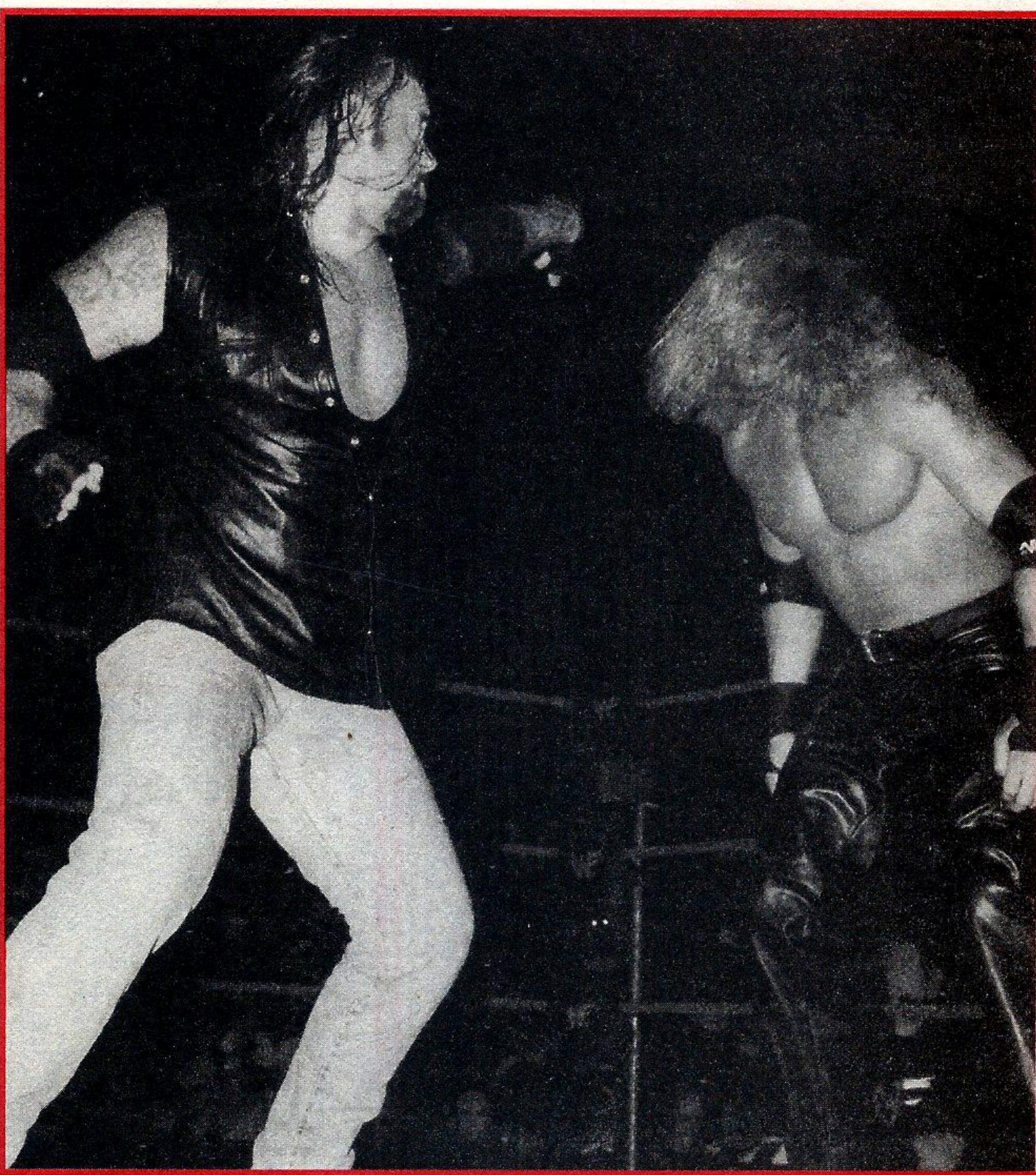
tial. In fact, I think that in a year or so, he'll be the man to beat in the WWF.

Q: How about you?

A: I'm always the man to beat in the WWF.

Q: Let's talk about what's happened since you've returned to action. First of all, The Rock. I think a lot of people are wondering where you stand with The Rock.

A: Where I stand? That's a tough question. The Rock's always going to be either the WWF champion or a top contender to the WWF championship. That means he's always going to be in my way. I want the title. In my opinion, the only reason to wrestle is to be the WWF champion. So as long as he's in my



The Undertaker unleashes a savage right hand to the head of Test. Though 'Taker might no longer be a creature of the night, he's still one of the toughest competitors in the WWF.



In 1995, The Undertaker was a ghastly, pale-skinned ghoul who looked as if he might be undead (left). In 1999, Undertaker looked more like an evil warlock whose dark sorcery was meant to create chaos and confusion (below).



way, I'm going to have to go over him, through him, whatever. On the other hand, he's on the opposite side of the McMahon-Helmsley clique, so that means we're on the same side of the ball. Put it this way: If he needs help against Triple-H or any of the McMahons, I'm there. But if the WWF title's on the line, he's gonna have to deal with me.

Q: Does Kane feel the same way?

A: You're gonna have to ask him that yourself.

Q: Well, you said that the WWF World title is your main goal, but you and Kane seem to have made the WWF World tag team title a priority, too.

A: I've been a WWF tag team champion before, and that's gotta be one of the toughest

belts to defend in the world. Both teammates have to be on, and if one's off, then you're gonna lose the title. The one thing I've wanted to do for a long time is win the tag straps with Kane. If you ask me, Edge

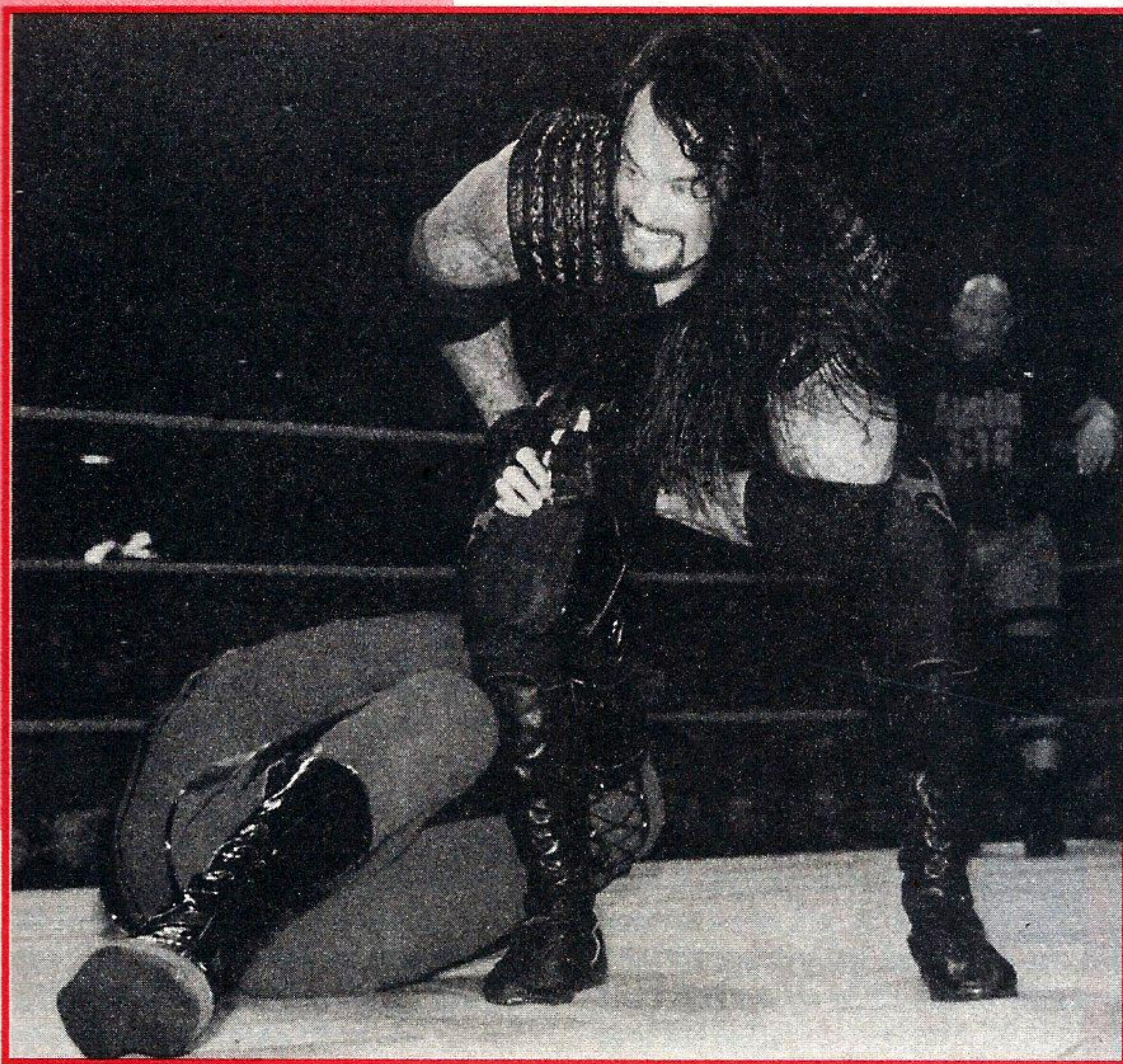
and Christian are nothing unless somebody interferes for them. The only thing that kept us from the belts back in July was that idiot Kurt Angle.

Q: Angle got you pretty angry, didn't he?

A: Let me tell you something about Kurt Angle: There's nothing in this world worse than a phony. That's why people hate him so much. He comes out playing the part of the all-American boy who drinks milk and always follows the rules, but the truth is that he's out for nobody but himself. He's like that kid in

school, the one who's always sucking up to the teachers, the one I used to kick the crap out of whenever I had the chance. The fans see right through him and so do I. What a gutless wonder! He has the nerve to interfere in our tag team title match, then he turns around and apologizes for interfering. Well, he was only trying to save his ass. And that thing with him spilling milk on my motorcycle? You think he didn't do that on purpose? I'll tell you what, he knew exactly what he was doing, but he was afraid of getting his ass kicked, so he made like he didn't know

and that it was a big mistake. You'd better know that I'm gonna be the hero of the WWF when I destroy Kurt Angle. The people are gonna love it, and the rest of the boys are gonna love it, too, because he's



of great wrestlers who want the belt, but what makes it easier is that you can win the belt in these three-way matches and so on. That makes it tougher to defend, but easier to win. Hell, that's just the way things are these days. I'd admire anybody who could hold on to the title for more than six months. A year, that would be like four years in the past. All I'm saying is that I want my share of the pie. When I win that title, I intend to hold on to it for a good long time, no matter what Vince McMahon and Shane McMahon have up their sleeves. The era of The Undertaker has just begun.

Q: Undertaker, thank you for your time, and good luck.

A: I don't need luck. Remember that. ☐

the most hated man in the federation.

Q: Well, I don't know about that. There's also Triple-H, Vince, Shane ...

A: Hey, at least Triple-H has the guts to get into that ring and wrestle. Same goes for the McMahons. All Angle ever does is run and hide. Just the fact that he's an Olympic gold medalist chaps my ass.

Q: Now you're sounding like the Undertaker of old. Do ...

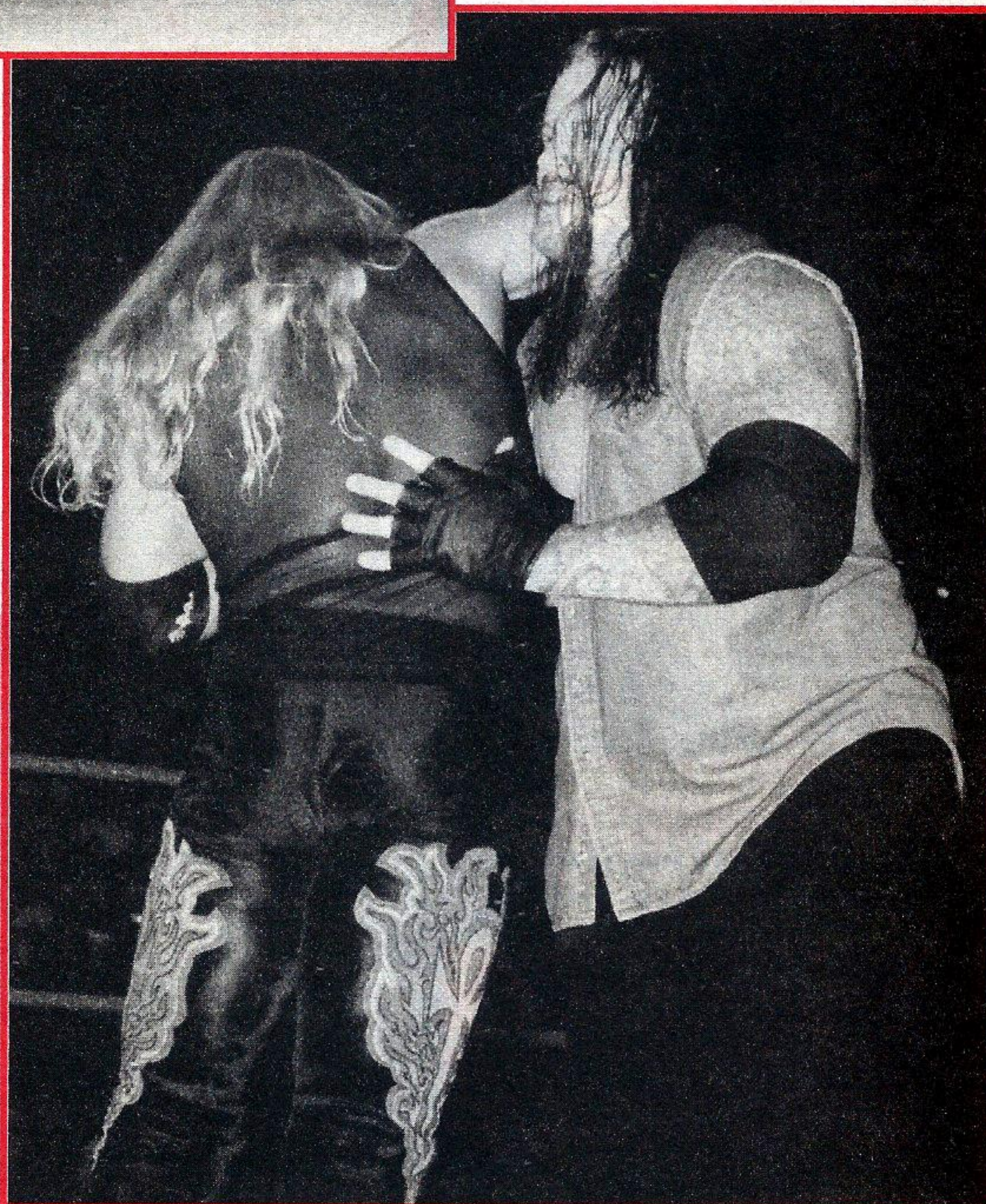
A: There is no Undertaker of old and no Undertaker of new. Same man, same attitude, different packaging. So what. Now I'm riding a motorcycle instead of walking to the ring ...

Q: And you wear colors besides black ...

A: Hey, you're looking at the packaging and not paying attention to the man within. The same goes now that's gone all along: If you mess with me, you should expect to pay the price.

Q: Is the WWF World heavyweight title scene tougher than ever?

A: I'll tell you this—there are a lot

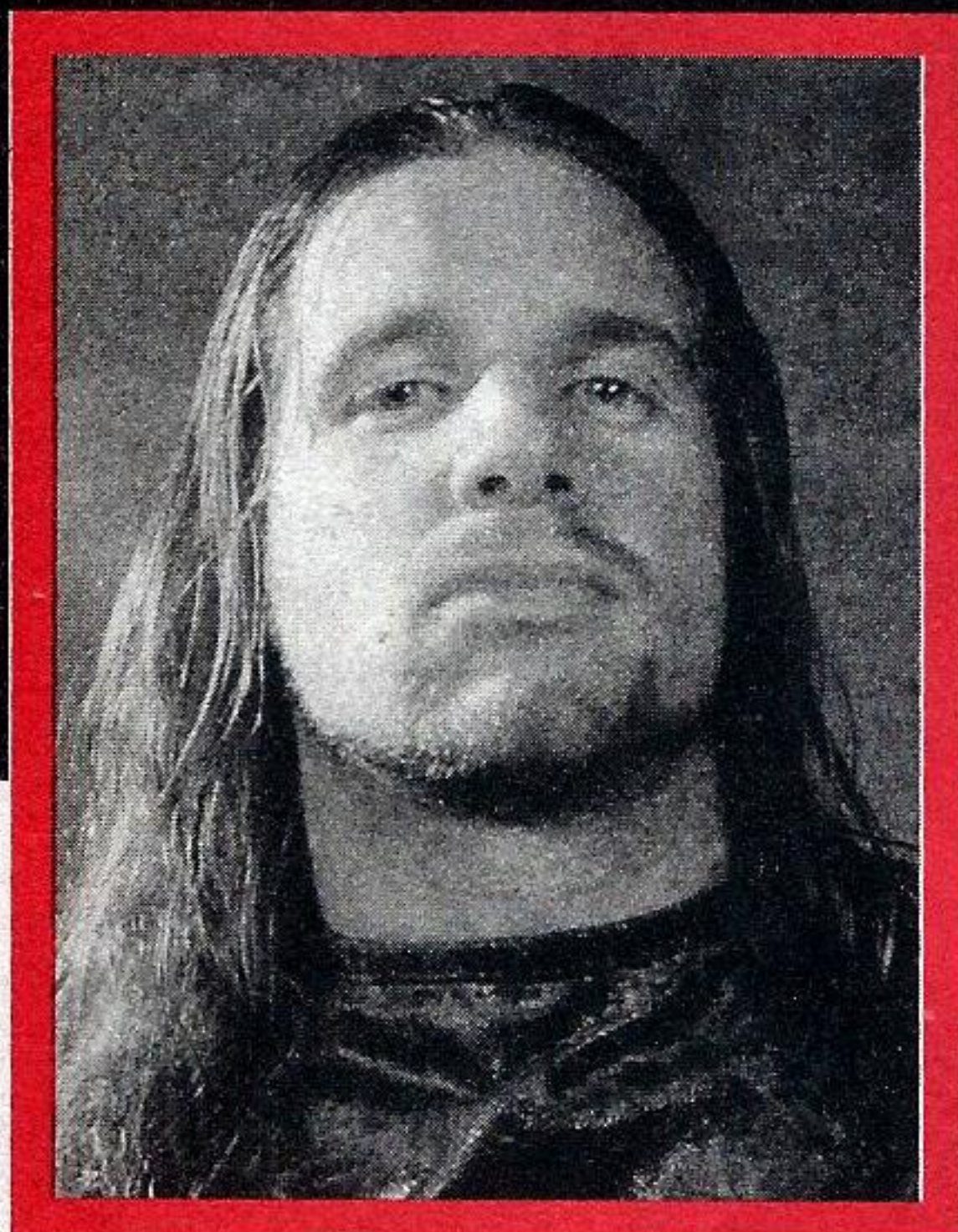


Though Undertaker and Kane have had their troubles in the past (top left), they have recently put aside their differences. Right now, they're only a choke-slam away from becoming the WWF World tag team champions (above).

X-Ray

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

NOVA



Nova knocks the spit out of Lance Storm's mouth with a crushing right hand. Though Nova prefers to wow the crowd with his high-flying artistry, he can trade blows with virtually anyone.



CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"I've been watching Nova for a while, and I'll tell you, this guy knows how to market himself. I really enjoy watching him make his entrance. As soon as the crowd hears the Beastie Boys, they get rowdy, and then Nova comes out and the excitement goes up a level. And besides marketing himself well, he's a good wrestler, too. You don't find that combination too often these days, daddy. I'd offer to manage him if I thought he needed one, but he doesn't."

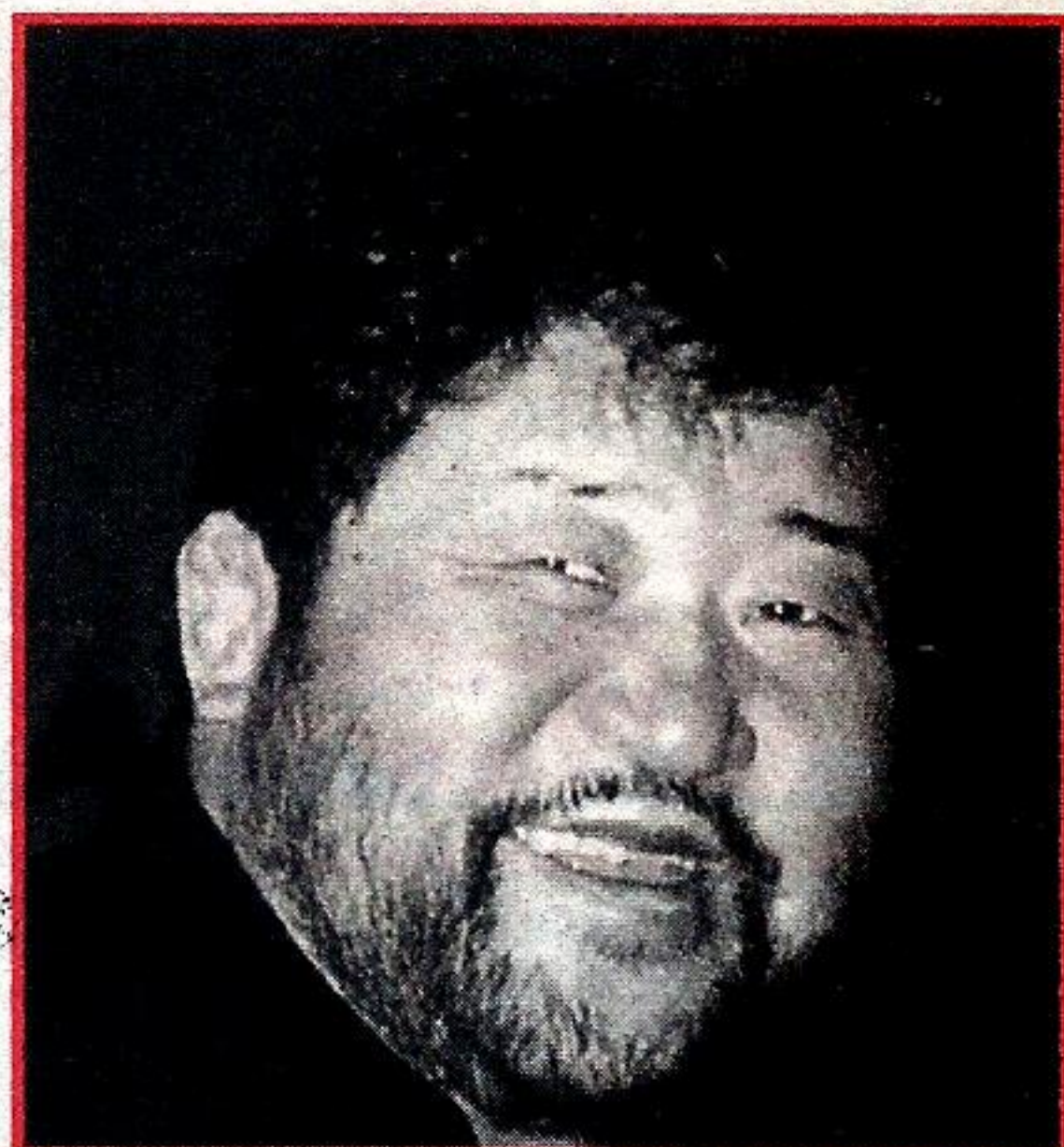
Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," managed 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"Ah, this Nova character. I see his type way too often these days. There's a reason he's been in ECW for so long without winning a title. He's too wrapped up in trying to be a superhero. He likes wearing those flashy costumes, and I've always said that anybody can buy and wear a flashy costume—it's what they do while wearing the costume that matters. And far as I can tell, Nova hasn't done a whole lot. It's time for Nova to put up or shut up."

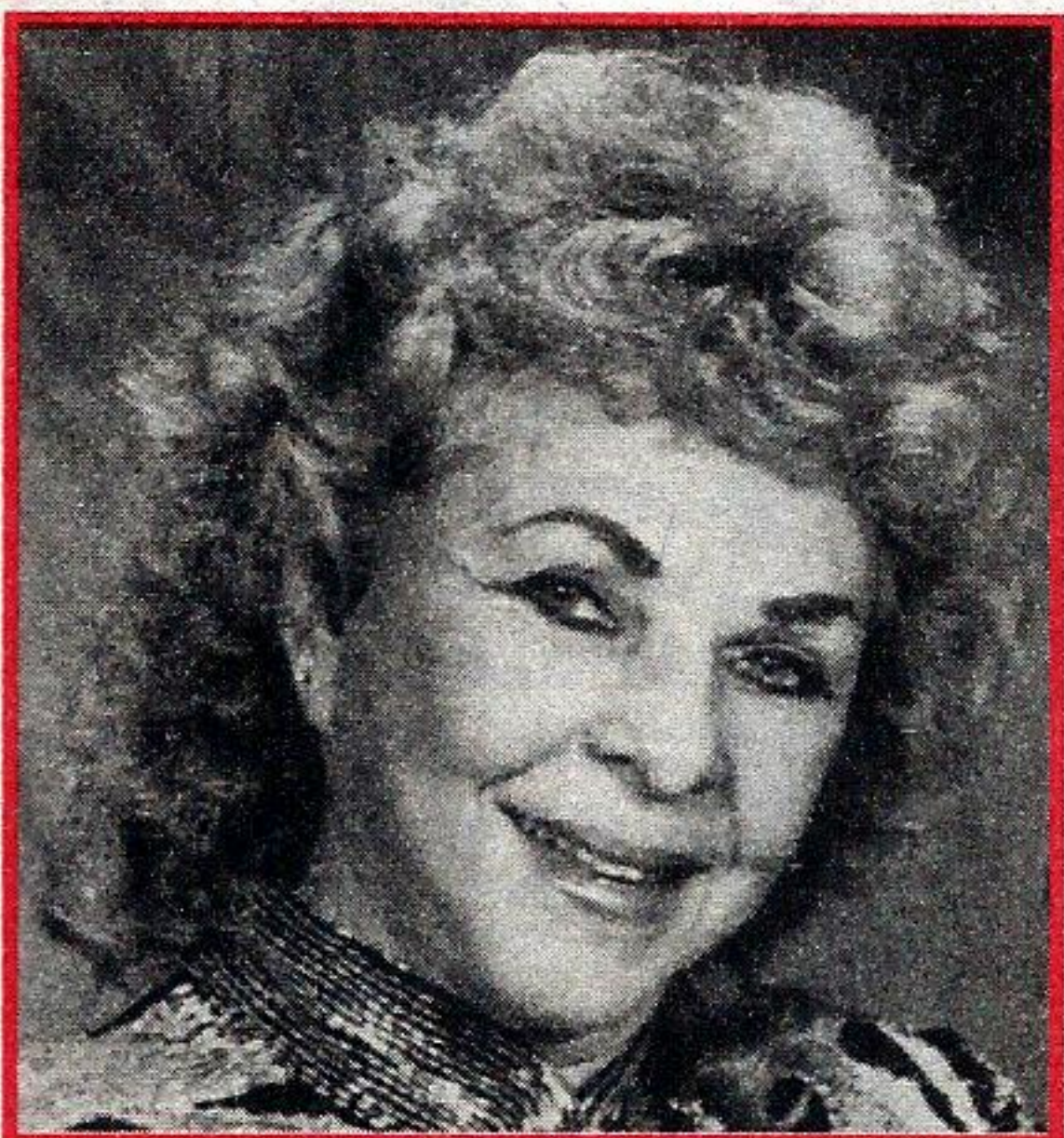
Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the history of the sport, runs a wrestling school in Malden, Massachusetts.



MASSA SAITO

"A dedicated fan base is important, and Nova's got one. When *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* forgot to include Nova in its 1998 'PWI 500,' Nova fans came out in support of their favorite wrestler. Believe me, that means something. Not every wrestler has enough fans to launch a successful grassroots campaign. Nova does. I think it's because he's so daring in the ring. He'll try anything once, and if it doesn't kill him, he'll try it again. He has a good future."

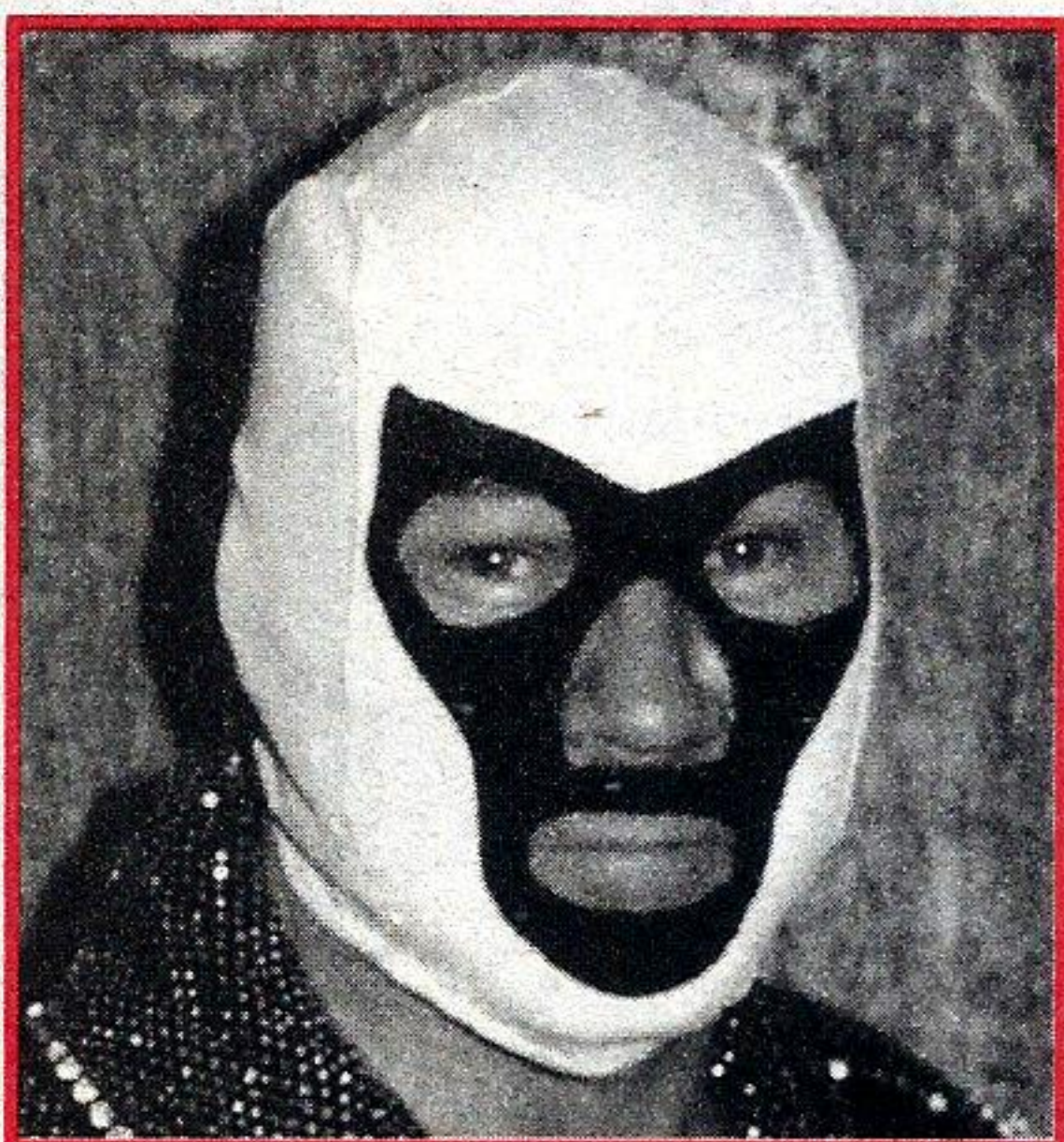
Massa Saito, a former AWA World heavyweight and WWF World tag team champion, retired last year after a 24-year career.



FABULOUS MOOLAH

"I'm not completely sold on this kid yet, hon. He seems to have the heart and the will to go far in this business, so I don't know if it's connections or something else holding him back, but he has yet to have that breakout match. I'd like to see Paul E. let this kid be something more than just one of ECW's top cheerleaders. Maybe then I'd be able to get a real handle on how good he is. I know that a run as TV champ would do wonders for his career."

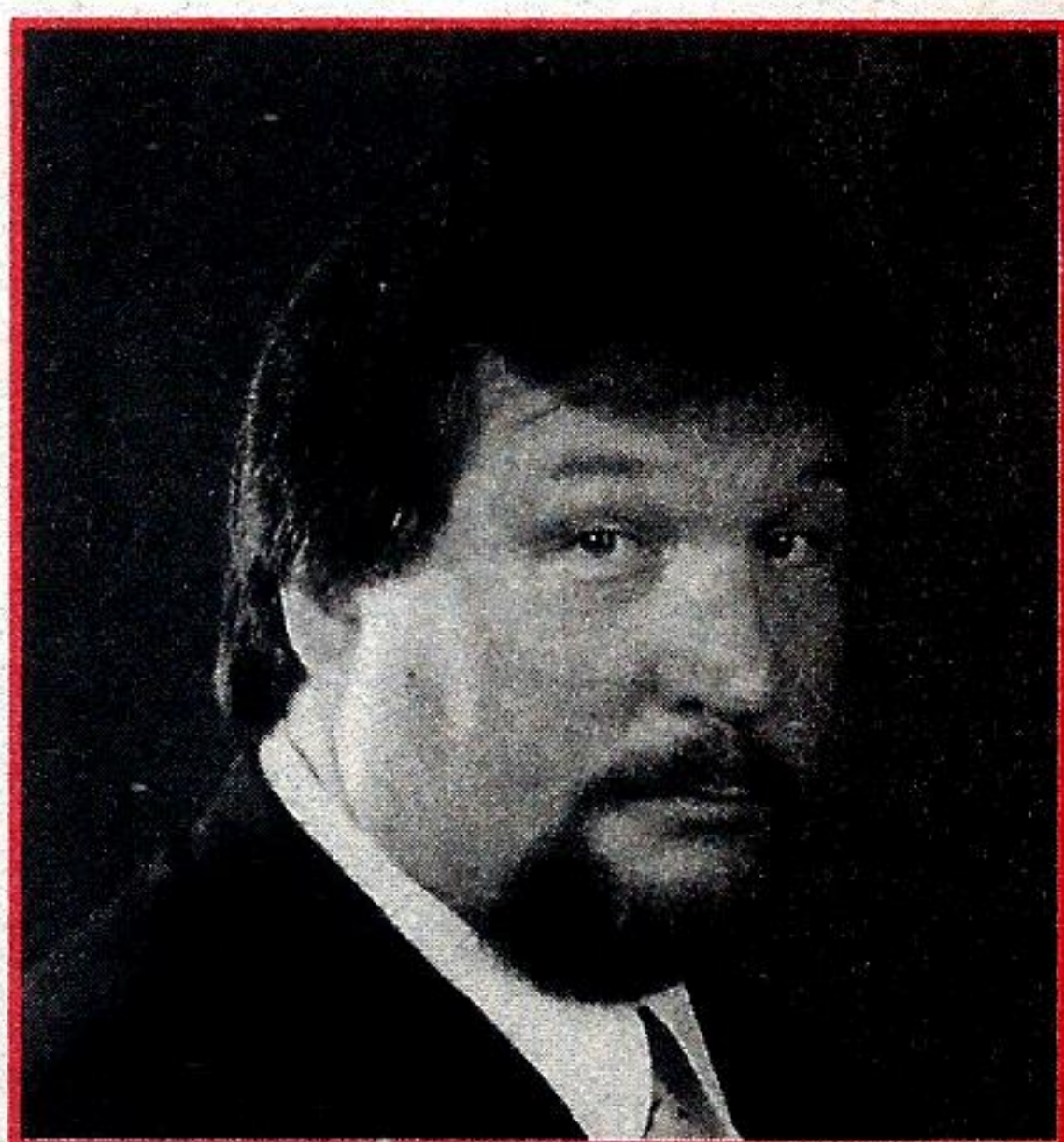
Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She is now a trainer and a part-time competitor.



MR. WRESTLING II

"I think you'll be surprised to find that I like Nova a lot. He's got a lot of spunk and has more raw talent than most of the guys in that promotion. You don't see Tommy Dreamer or The Sandman doing the moves that Nova does. That's for sure. His size is a hindrance, but there's nothing to be done about that. He is who he is in that regard. But even so, you don't need to be huge to be successful anymore. You just need to be good. And believe me, Nova is good."

Mr. Wrestling II, one of wrestling's most popular and accomplished stars, held many regional tag team and singles titles throughout the South.



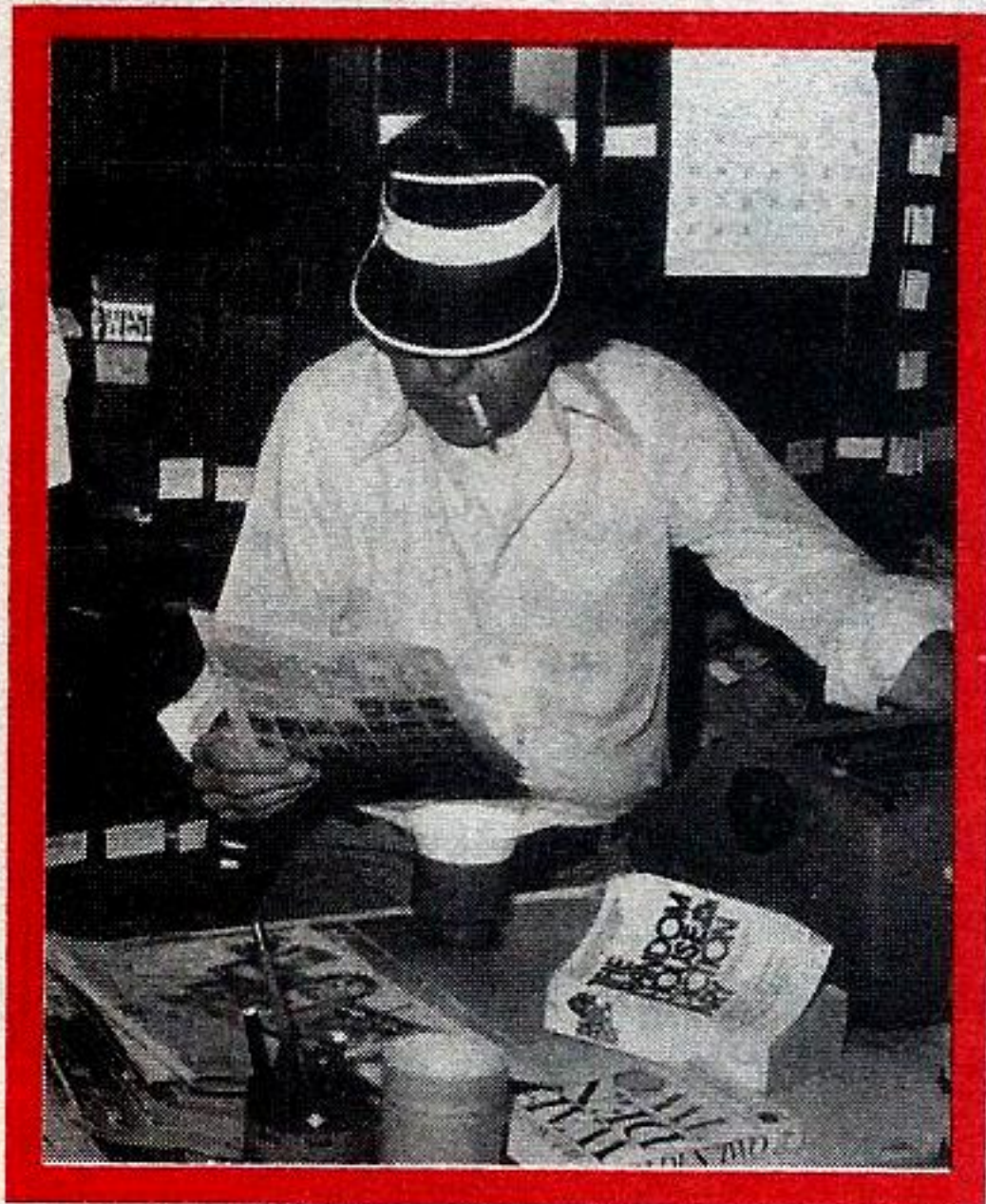
TED DiBIASE

"All this kid needs is a manager, because his only problem is that he's way too nice for his own good. I mean, he's been in ECW for a few years now, but still he takes the time to show newcomers like Kid Kash the ropes. If Nova wasn't so willing to give his time to others, I know he would have at least won a World tag team title with Chris Chetti, and maybe even more. The only thing holding Nova back is Nova, and I don't expect that to last much longer."

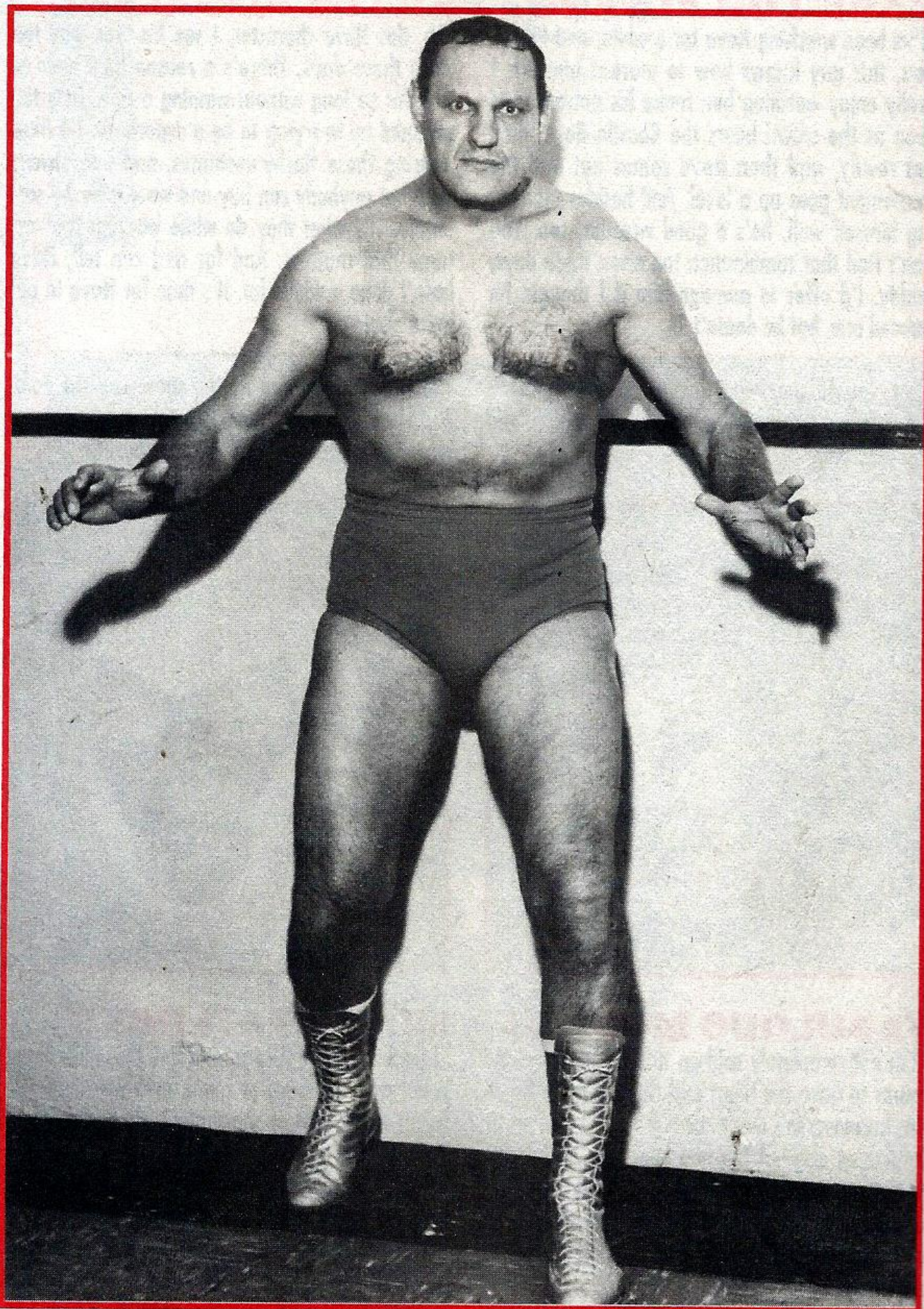
Ted DiBiase, a three-time WWF World tag team champion and one of the sport's most accomplished managers, is now retired from the sport.

MATT BROCK

Remembers



KILLER KOWALSKI



H EARD THAT AN old-timer named Kowalski was running for political office. Later found out it was Stan "The Big K" Kowalski, not the legendary Walter "Killer" Kowalski. Made sense after hearing it, though. About 40 or so years ago, Walter Kowalski wouldn't have bothered running for office; he would have just grabbed the incumbent by the head and taken a chunk out of his throat. And I imagine he's still the same way today. You can't just take the bite out of a man that Machiavellian.

Never forget the night Kowalski first came to my attention. It was 1954, and New York was a miserable town even then. But I was typing in the office that my boss called "the hovel" when I got a call from some crazy canuck screaming about how one of his boys had lost an ear during a match in Montreal. Now, that was really no big thing years ago, especially since everybody who wrestled had cauliflower ears back then. But the way it happened, now that was special.

See, Kowalski, who was as green as an unripened tomato,

was still breaking in. And Yukon Eric, his opponent for the night, was known for making it hard on rookies, and he planned to do the

same to Kowalski. Kowalski, though, marched right into the ring, dropped a knee across Eric's head, and ripped three-quarters of

Eric's ear right off. The shocking thing was that Kowalski wasn't even remorseful. In fact, he still laughs about it.

"Blood spilled all over the place," Kowalski recalled. "Yukon Eric was bleeding all over the place when the ref looked at me and said, 'What do I do now?'"

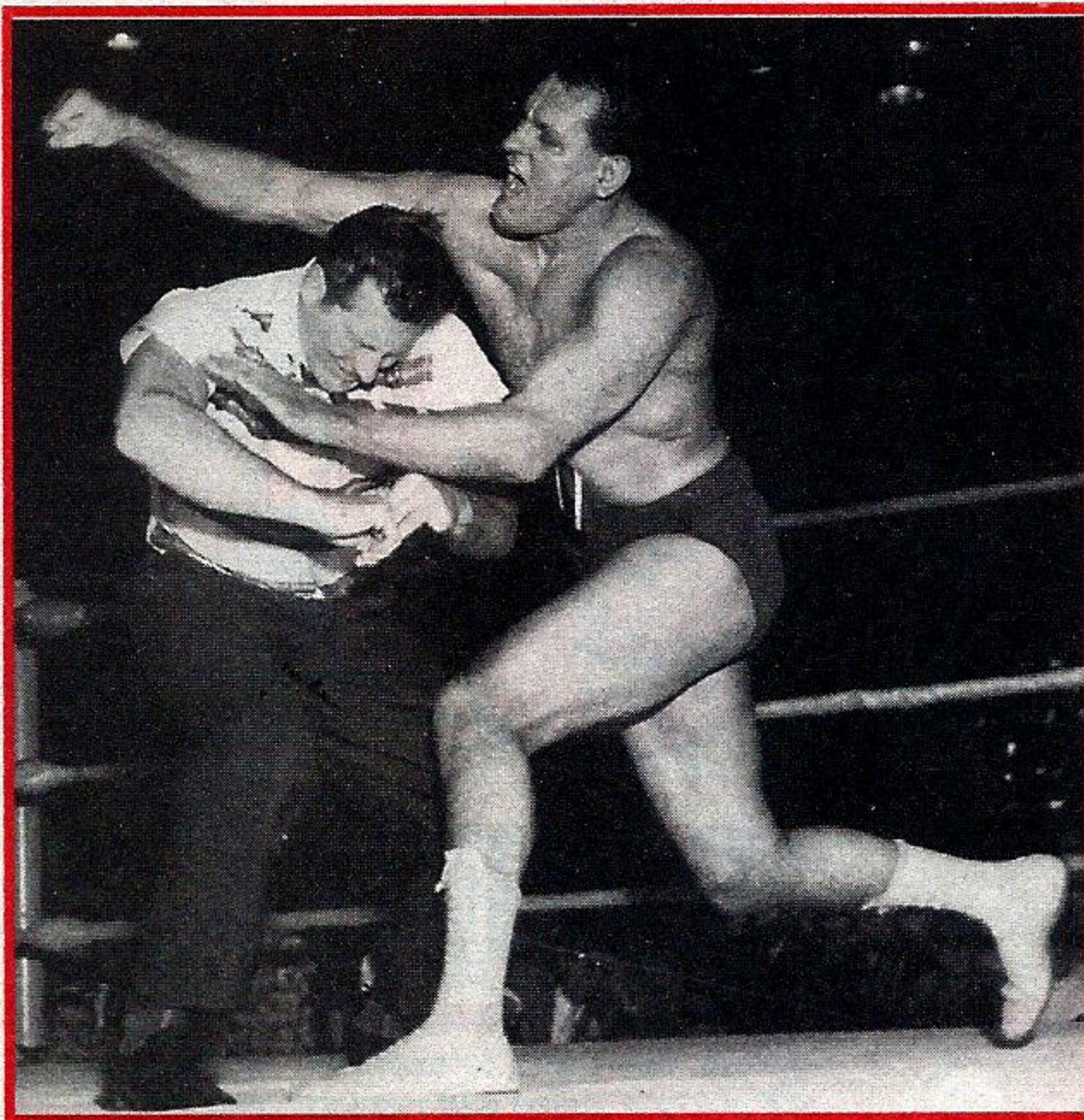
"I said, 'What do you mean, what do you do? Put my arm up! My opponent just quit.' And I won the match."

Kowalski was 6'6" and weighed 280 pounds, which was huge for wrestlers in those days. And he was one of those guys who could wrestle all night, too.

"I wrestled him one time for 45 minutes and was in fairly good shape," Stu Hart said. "I was up and down for 45 minutes, and he was still as fresh as a daisy by the time we finished. I was wondering when he was going to run down."

The answer turned out to be never. After he retired, Kowalski opened a wrestling school in Massachusetts. Quite a few top wrestlers have trained there, including John Studd, Triple-H, and Chyna. Of course, he's older than dirt now, but that doesn't stop Killer from knocking sense into the young guys.

"These kids today look at the WWF and think they're ready to become the next Helmsley the day after they get here," Kowalski said. "Very few of them have any real work ethic, but there are some that do. Those kids I really harp on, because if they can survive me, they can survive damn near anything."



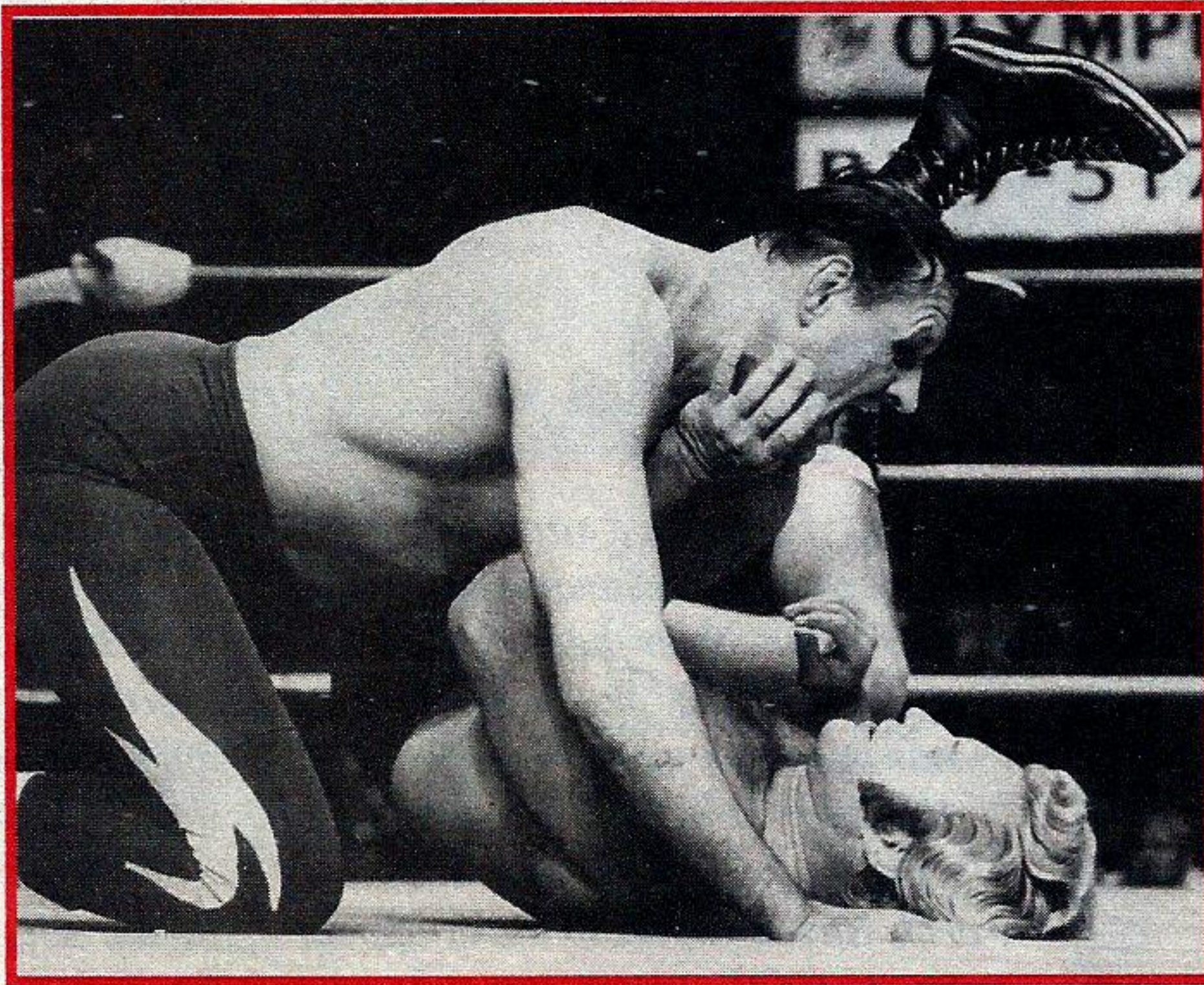
Pretty sure Yukon Eric preferred Kowalski's deadly clothesline to his even deadlier kneedrop. Looking like a dapper Dan with one ear missing is tough enough, and you're just an ugly S.O.B. with two ears missing.

Maybe the most amazing thing about Kowalski is that despite all his success in the ring, he never won a world title. Oh, he had his chances. Back in 1962, he had a series of matches against NWA World champion Buddy Rogers that had the "Nature Boy" running for his life. One night at the Garden, Kowalski kept pounding Rogers with punches and kicks, then he

and scores the pin. Back then, title matches were all best-of-three-falls matches, but Rogers had broken his ankle and couldn't continue. Rogers kept the belt, and Kowalski couldn't have been madder.

"You explain that one to me," he challenged the media hounds on hand that night. "I pin him, then he breaks his ankle through no fault of mine, and he gets to keep the belt. That make sense to any of you?"

Of course, none of the media boys was going to disagree with Kowalski. Doing that was one sure way to end up in the hospital with different colored tubes sticking out of your body. And like I said before, this reporter isn't so sure Killer has mellowed. If he had been running for office, he could very well have turned those boring televised debates into free-for-alls. Who knows, some of those political shysters might have wound up missing ears, too. □



Don't think Kowalski was afraid of any man, not even toward the end of his career. Even Nick Bockwinkel, who would go on to win the AWA World title three years after this picture was taken, was floored by the aging Killer.

Spot Light N...

RAVEN

"RAVEN IS ..." ONLY those who call Raven a friend—and maybe not even all of them—can finish that statement. One of ECW's most popular stars ever, Raven has shrouded himself in mystery and misery. With his Pearl Jam-esque vernacular and penchant for lamenting his past, one would think Raven's childhood was spent moving from cardboard box to abandoned car and back again. Things, however, aren't always what they seem.

In 1988, Raven got his start as Scotty the Body in the NWA Pacific Northwest, but it wasn't long before WCW came calling. As Scotty Flamingo, Raven was a flamboyant elitist who had no problem flaunting his success (he did win the WCW light heavyweight belt once). Ironically, Flamingo stood for everything Raven would eventually despise.

After a short, mostly managerial tour with the WWF as Johnny Polo, the man who for years had played the rich, spoiled brat took his wares to ECW in 1995 and debuted as Raven, an anti-establishment, poetic soul who thrived by going against the grain. The character caught on.

In ECW, Raven captured the ECW heavyweight title twice and became a cult hero by embroiling himself in bloody, personal wars with two of



ECW's favorite sons: Tommy Dreamer and The Sandman. On June 7, 1997, Dreamer beat Raven in a loser-leaves-ECW match. Their rivalry was over—or so everyone thought.

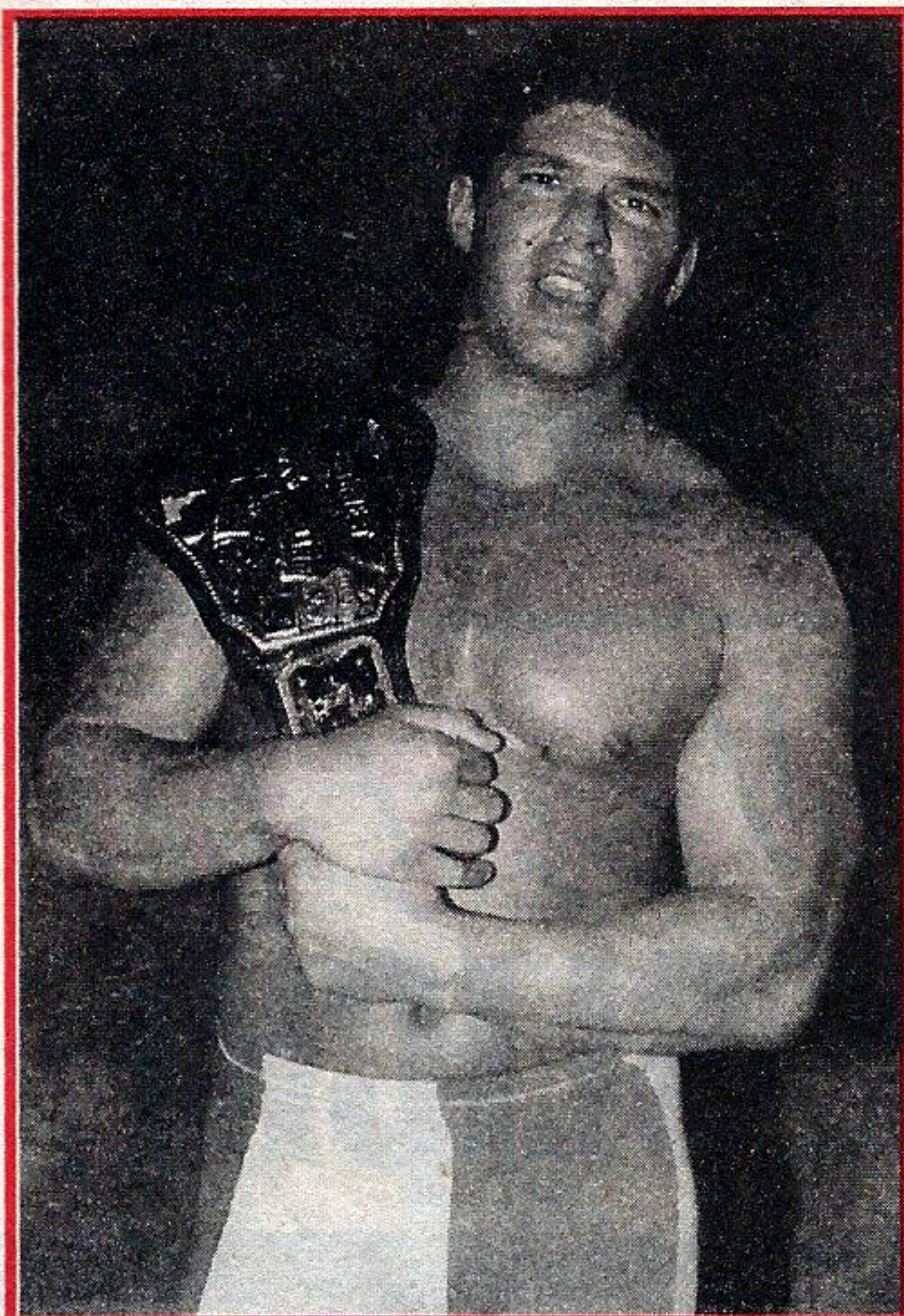
Unhappy and possibly unsure of his proper place in the wrestling world, Raven began to make appearances at WCW shows, but refused to sign a WCW contract until WCW met the condition that all his matches be contested under "Raven's" rules

(meaning no disqualifications). WCW agreed, but after Raven formed The Flock, a group consisting of Perry Saturn, Billy Kidman, and others, WCW realized its mistake. It had given Raven the right to be lawless, and Raven became one of the most feared and violent men in the federation.

Raven, despite the lack of restrictions, felt stifled in WCW. The Flock flew the coop, and though Raven did capture one U.S. and one World tag title (with Saturn), when WCW President Eric Bischoff offered an outright release to any WCW wrestler who wanted one in the summer of 1999, Raven left.

Less than a week later, Raven returned to ECW by helping Tommy Dreamer beat The Dudley Boyz for the ECW World tag team title, thereby preventing Buh Buh Ray and D-Von from taking the belts to the WWF. Raven and Dreamer, though, continued to feud even as they held the World tag team title together. It wasn't until April 22, 2000, after Dreamer won ECW's World title, that the two mended ways.

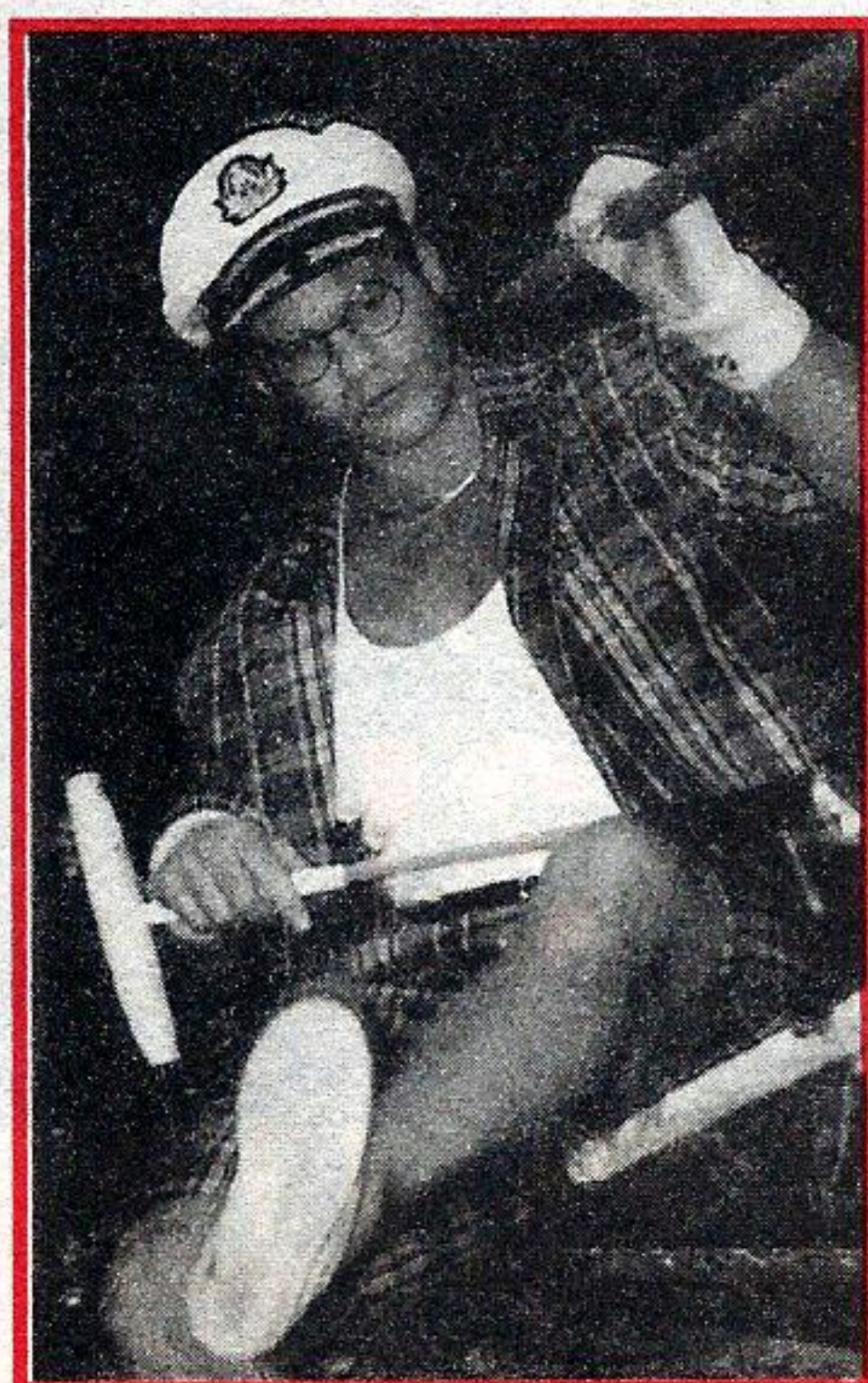
Now as he heads back to the WWF, Raven's legacy continues to grow. To some, he's an icon; to others, he's a spoiled crybaby. Whatever Raven is, he's certainly worthy of our "Spotlight."



April 1990: Early in his career, Raven wrestled as the loud and bolsterous Scotty the Body. He would capture the NWA Pacific Northwest title three times, the tag title twice, and the TV title once before moving on.



May 1992: It's hard to believe, but Raven, as Scotty Flamingo, was almost as outspoken and ostentatious as Jesse "The Body" Ventura during his first run with WCW.



February 1994: Yup, that's Raven as the WWF's Johnny Polo. As Polo, Raven stuck mainly to managing, leading The Quebecers to a stunning defeat of the World tag team champion Steiner brothers.

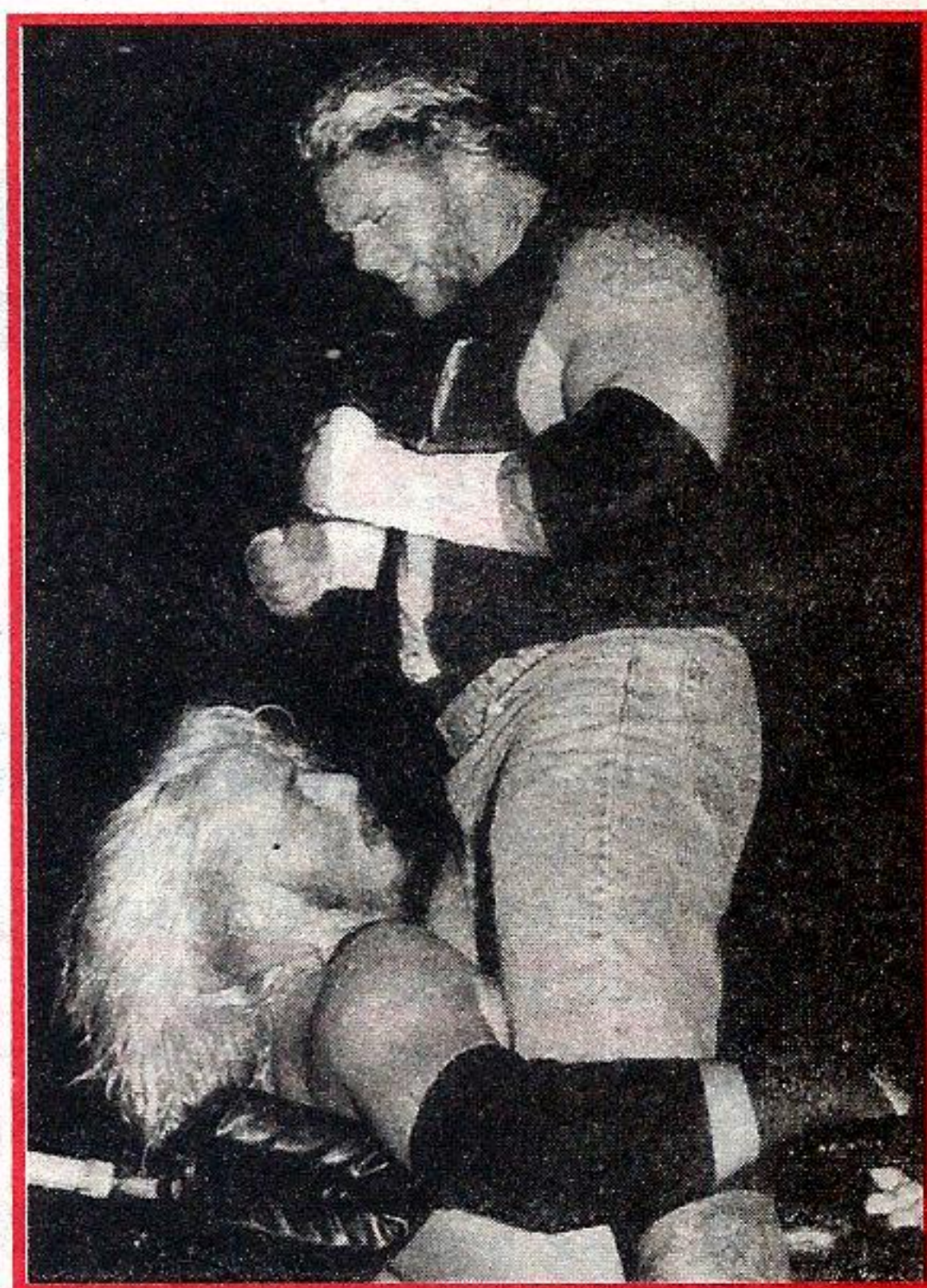


January 1997: In ECW, Raven made a name for himself by being able to fight through immeasurable amounts of pain. His feud with The Sandman included more than its share of barbed wire and bloodshed.

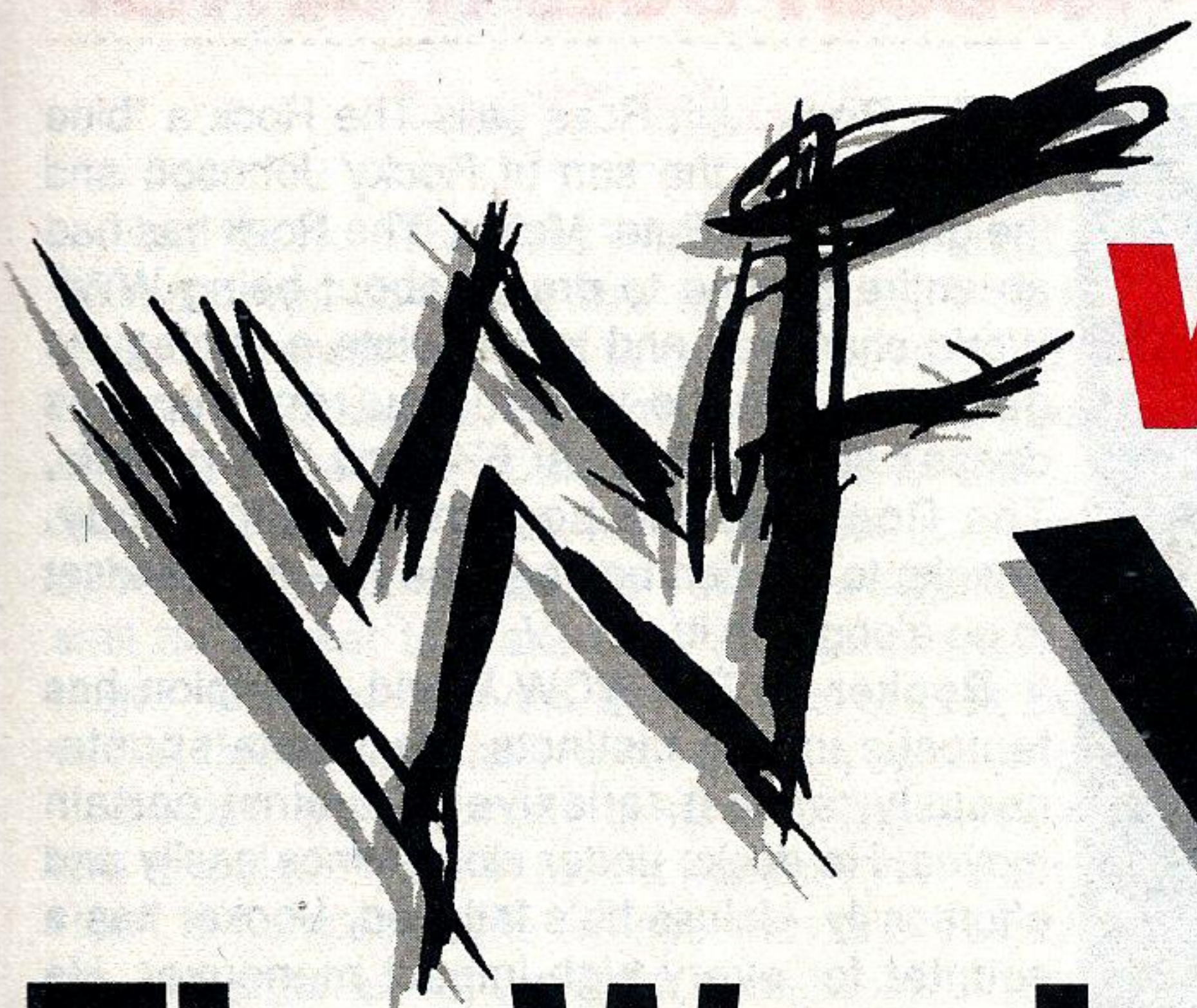


January 1998: Shortly after returning to WCW, Raven surrounded himself with unappreciated wrestlers such as Sick Boy, Billy Kidman, and Perry Saturn. The creation of Raven's Flock made Raven very powerful.

December 1999: Raven thoroughly enjoys humiliating others, which is why he gave a little play-by-play while pounding his fist into Steve Corino's head. He does have a humorous side.



The **TOP 10** **FACEOFF!**



VS.

WCW

The War Is **Not** Over!

THE WWF IS walloping WCW in terms of television ratings and pay-per-view buy rates, and that's the bottom line as far as Vince McMahon is concerned. But how does the WWF's talent roster compare to that of WCW?

In regard to genuine wrestling talent, the WWF and WCW remain very competitive, which makes the fifth annual "Top 10 Faceoff" all the more intriguing. In fact, that is the one battle Vince McMahon and the WWF could be in danger of losing.

Many of the "Faceoffs" appear to be in the WWF's favor at the outset: The Undertaker vs. Vampiro, Kane vs. Chris Canyon, and Eddie Guerrero vs. Big Vito. But, as is revealed in the exclusive analysis provided by five members of THE WRESTLER staff, those contests would likely be much closer than initially expected.

Even this year's all-important "No. 1 vs. No. 1" battle, pitting WWF World champion The Rock vs. WCW

World champion Booker T, might be considered a mismatch in The Rock's favor. But wouldn't you pay to see it? We know we would.

At a glance, the other "Faceoffs" are too tough to call, including Val Venis vs. Scott Steiner, Chris Benoit vs. Jeff Jarrett, Triple-H vs. Bill Goldberg, Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Nash, Kurt Angle vs. Mike Awesome, and Rikishi vs. Shane Douglas.

Since it was our mission to make the tough choices, we struggled to find the winners of each hypothetical match, and there were no matches in which all five panelists agreed on the victor. The top 10 rankings of the "Faceoff" are based on THE WRESTLER's "Official Ratings" as of July 16, 2000.

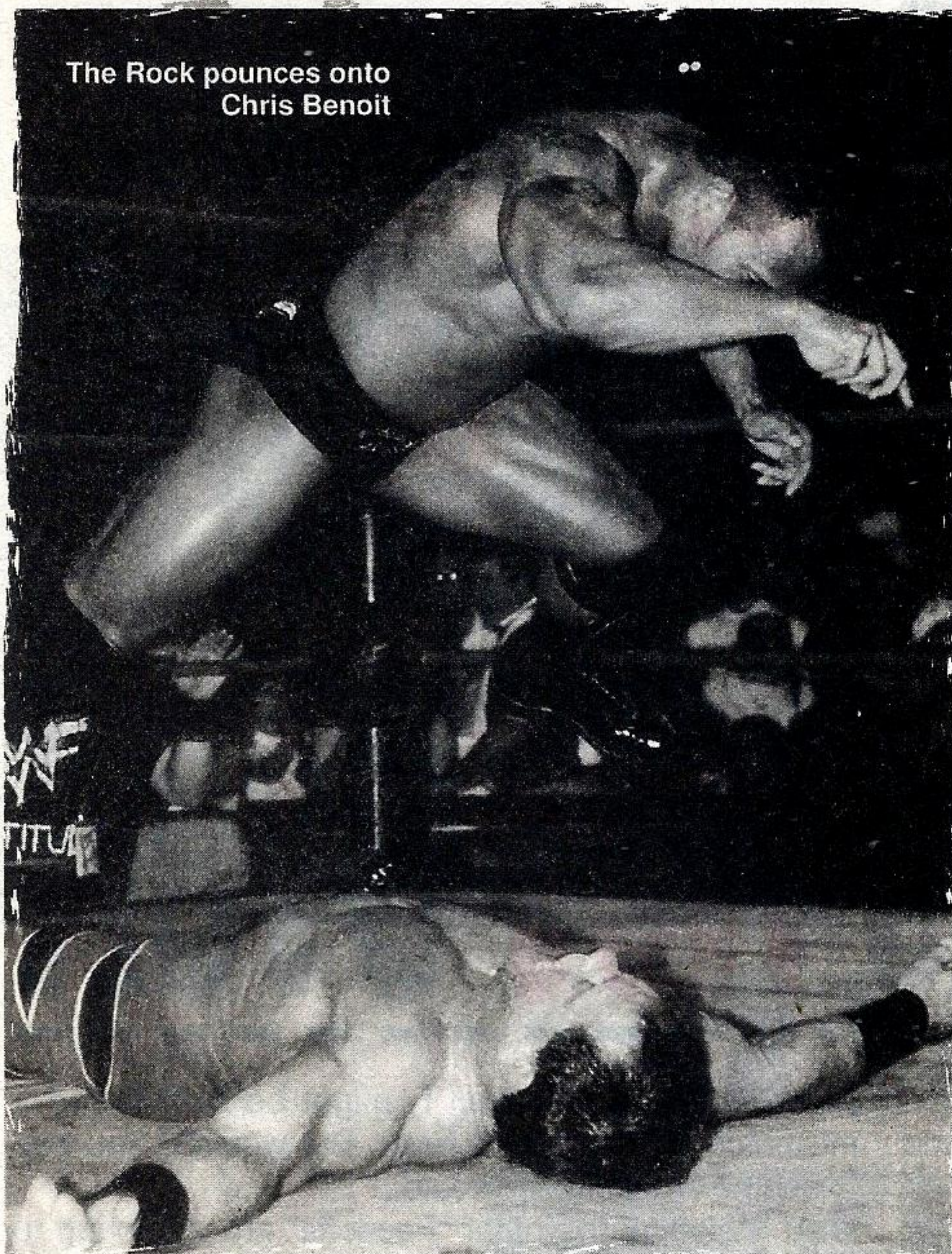
As formidable as the WCW roster remains, the WWF won the "Faceoff" for the second year in a row. Compared to "Faceoffs" of previous years, it was a very decisive victory. Let us know what you think of our picks.

The ROCK V

No. 1 vs. No. 1

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

The Rock pounces onto
Chris Benoit



Three years ago, if someone had to bet on a future world champion, who would have been a more likely candidate? The Rock or Booker T? At the time, The Rock was struggling as a hand-slapping, baby-kissing fan favorite, and Booker T was a seven-time WCW World tag team champion. Back then, Booker T as a world champion in the year 2000 did not seem too far-fetched. The idea that young Rocky Maivia would already be on his fifth WWF World title reign would have been, though. Is Booker T the underdog? Maybe not.

The Rock: Jim Ross calls The Rock a "blue chipper." He's the son of Rocky Johnson and the grandson of Peter Maivia. The Rock has had an entire lifetime to dream about being WWF World champion and to formulate a strategy to get there. That's why his current success doesn't surprise him. At 6'4" and 274 pounds, The Rock has the perfect wrestling body. Thanks to his rich heritage, he has the mindset to go along with it.

Booker T: The WCW World champion has fantastic in-ring instincts. He reacts spontaneously, almost reflexively, against certain moves. He ducks under clotheslines easily and effortlessly. Unless he's fatigued, Booker has a counter for every high-impact maneuver. He isn't an expert in mat counterwrestling, but that becomes less relevant by the year. Booker can reverse a huracanrana into a power bomb in a heartbeat; these days, that's more important.

ACHILLES HEELS

The Rock: When The Rock faced Chris Benoit in a submission match, much was made about The Rock's lack of submission wrestling expertise. But The Rock learned submission wrestling at an early age—he just hasn't put it to much use. He's out of practice. To Rock, wrestling is all about showmanship. He realizes fans would rather see a rock 'em, sock 'em slugfest—complete with the Samoan drop and people's elbow—than a tactical cat-and-mouse mat game. Booker, while no expert himself, would be aware of that weakness.

Booker T: "You can't do it, Booker T. You're never going to be a world champion." Booker has heard those type of comments his entire career. After a while, he began to listen to the naysayers. That's why he stuck with his brother, Stevie Ray, for so many years and wasted his time winning six or seven WCW World tag team titles too many. He finally achieved singles success by capturing the WCW TV title a record seven times. Yet Booker didn't move to

S. BOOKER T

the next level. Let us hope his unexpected World title win changed his attitude.

GAME PLAN

The Rock: While the WWF World champion is accustomed to being the aggressor, The Rock would be smart enough to allow Booker T to gain the early advantage. In terms of intensity and determination, Booker T would be prepared for this match like no other. The Rock, while younger in years and experience, would take the veteran's approach and wait for Booker to make his first tactical error. Rock might duck low to avoid the ax kick or jack Booker with a clothesline when he attempts a spinneroni.

Booker T: How many times has The Rock wrestled to a clean finish in recent months? Not often. The Rock is conditioned to wrestle with one eye toward the entrance as he waits for a member of the McMahon-Helmsley Faction to ambush him. Booker would play mind games with The Rock, eying the entrance ramp at appropriate moments to distract the WWF champ. In addition, Booker would lure Rock into delivering the people's elbow, roll away at the last second, and mount a comeback.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

The Rock: "The Rock tips the people's hat to you, Booker T. You're a damn good role model and a heluva WCW champion. Someday, The Rock will be proud to tell his grandkids about your exploits. But The Rock isn't a grandpa yet, and in the meantime, The Rock is gonna kick your candy ass! You'd better put those nasal strips back on, Booker T, so you can smell what The Rock is cookin'."

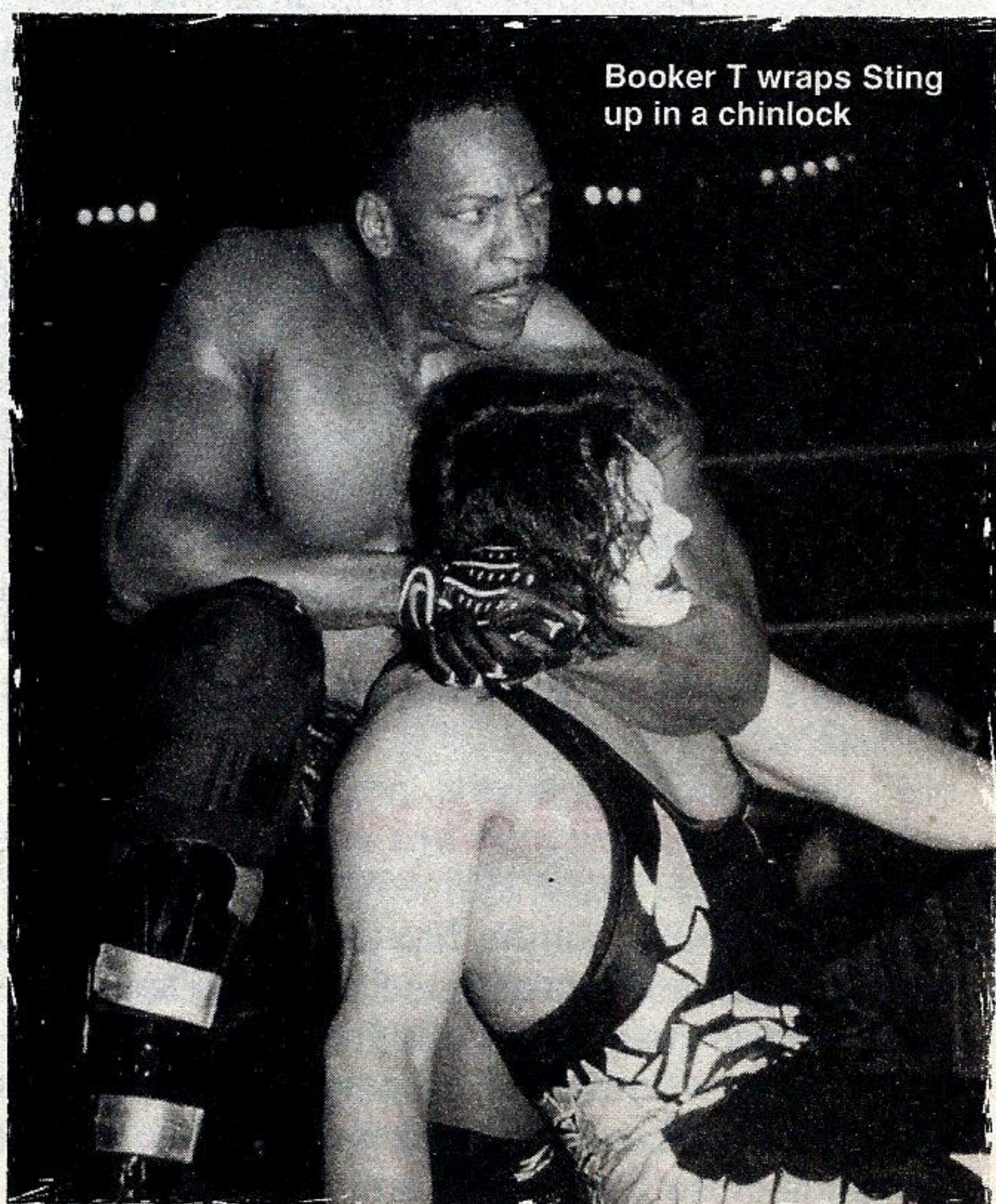
Booker T: "There's no doubt The Rock is the hottest performer in this business. Note that I say 'performer.' Booker T is the hardest worker in this business, now can you dig it? You were a world champion in your third year, Rock. I think you've had it a little easy. You've not sweated, bled, or fought in the streets like Booker T. I'm gonna expose you to some hard, cold reality, and it ain't gonna be pretty."

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Booker T
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): The Rock
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): The Rock
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): The Rock
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): The Rock

BOTTOM LINE

As hard as Booker T has worked and as dominant as he was in tag team competition, most of THE WRESTLER staff couldn't imagine him defeating someone with so much momentum and so much physical ability. The evil schemes of the McMahon-Helmsley Faction have thwarted The Rock in the past, but no one has proven to be superior in a fair one-on-one contest. Booker T has the integrity to wrestle cleanly. With that in mind, we predict the WWF World champion would defeat the WCW World champion with a Rock bottom. Booker T would shake The Rock's hand afterward.



Booker T wraps Sting up in a chinlock

Val **VENIS**

No. 2 vs. No. 2

Val Venis and Scott Steiner personify the WWF and WCW at its basest levels. Both men are lewd and crude, but Steiner is just a bit more rude. Presently, both stars are at a crossroads. Venis has sharpened his focus and regained the Intercontinental title. Steiner is more volatile than ever and swears he will destroy anyone in his path to win his first WCW World championship. Will Venis' newfound aggression be enough to curb Steiner's savage intentions?

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Val Venis: After experiencing a few false starts, Venis has finally straightened out his priorities. He has placed his professional ambitions before his gimmick. Hiring Trish Stratus as his manager—and resisting the temptation to hit on her—has given Val a whole new perspective on his career. Much like Triple-H a year ago, Venis is proclaiming it is “his time.” He has a new attitude and, perhaps, a new career beginning. Focus and determination are his key assets.

Scott Steiner: There is no more intimidating figure in pro wrestling than Steiner. As if the 26-inch biceps weren't frightening enough, Steiner's explosive temper has become notorious. He has assaulted officials behind the scenes, brutally attacked Kevin Nash, beat newly crowned WCW champion Booker T with a bat, and nearly wrenched out Mike Tenay's vocal cords! Facing Steiner is a daunting task because opponents know he's capable of absolutely anything. Even his brother, Rick, keeps his distance.

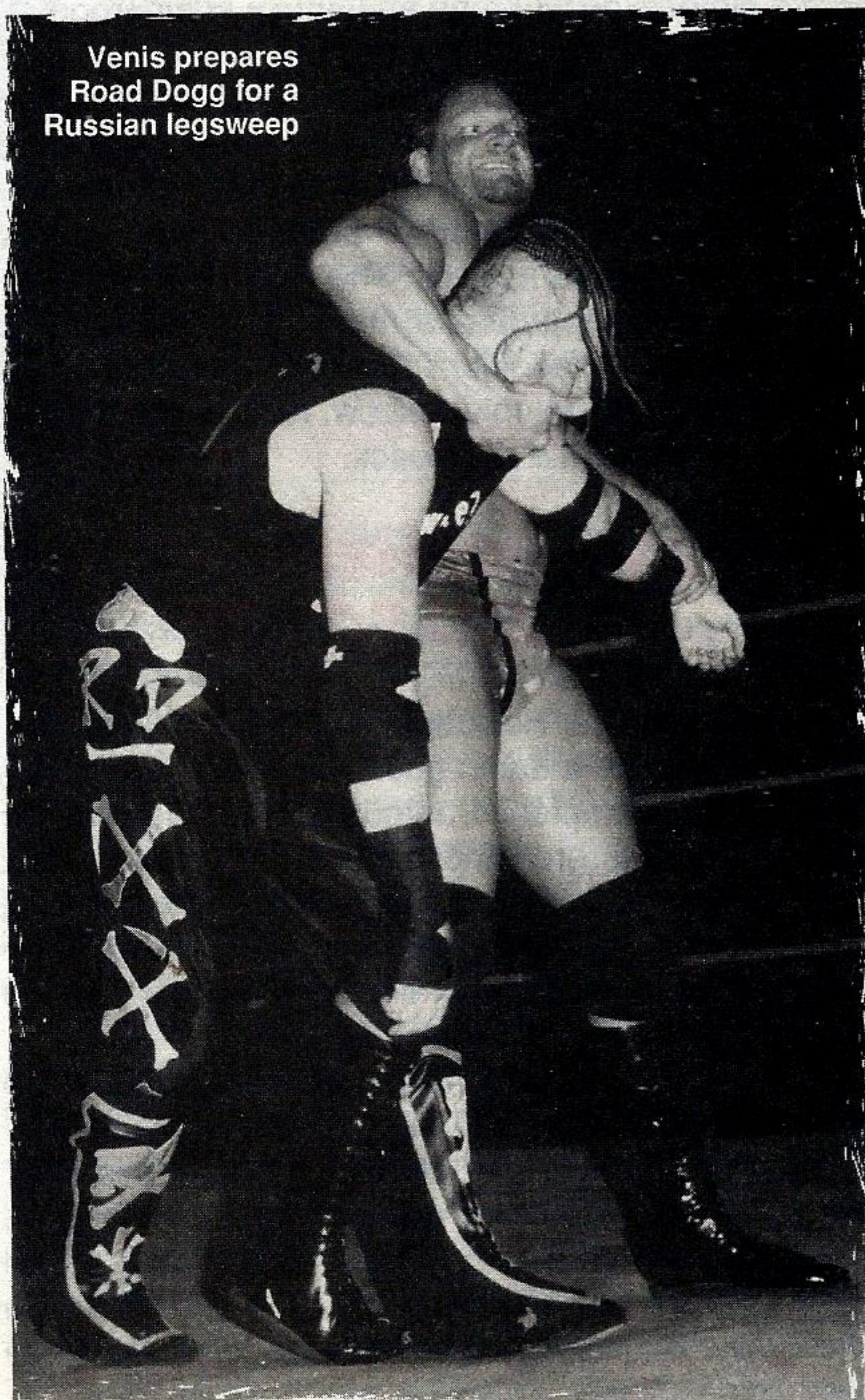
ACHILLES HEELS

Val Venis: For all the hip-swinging gyrations, raspy promos, and provocative films Venis has made during his two years in the WWF, he lacks self-confidence. When on the verge of greatness, Venis retreated into his one-dimensional persona. Even if he mends those flaws, there are still physical weak-

nesses. He was on the sidelines for several months with an injured neck and seemed a bit rusty upon his return. A neckbreaker or a well-applied chinlock could easily reinjure Venis.

Scott Steiner: “Big Poppa Pump” was AWOL from WCW for most of 1999, no thanks to two burst vertebrae. Few insiders thought Steiner could ever come back, comparing his back injuries to those suffered by Shawn Michaels in 1998. Steiner proved them wrong by returning to full-time action in 2000. Only a man large enough to suplex Steiner—or at least slam him on his back—is able to take advantage of this weakness.

Venis prepares Road Dogg for a Russian legsweep



S - Scott STEINER

GAME PLAN

Val Venis: The Intercontinental champion would keep moving, keep running, and not stop until he heard "Big Poppa Pump" gasping for air behind him. Steiner's freakishly developed musculature has diminished his cardiovascular conditioning, once a strong point of his offense. While Venis has a mean right hand, he would avoid slugging it toe-to-toe with Steiner because "Poppa" might unleash a Steiner-line with enough force to break Val's neck. Venis would bounce off the ropes, run through the crowd, and do anything else necessary to make the big man pant.

Scott Steiner: The all-American from the University of Michigan would try to keep Venis mid-ring, away from the ropes and turnbuckles. He would apply wristlocks on each of Val's wrists at different intervals, sapping away any punching power Venis could muster. Steiner would use chinlocks, swinging neckbreakers, and DDTs to weaken Val's neck. The Steiner recliner would be the perfect finishing hold in that situation.

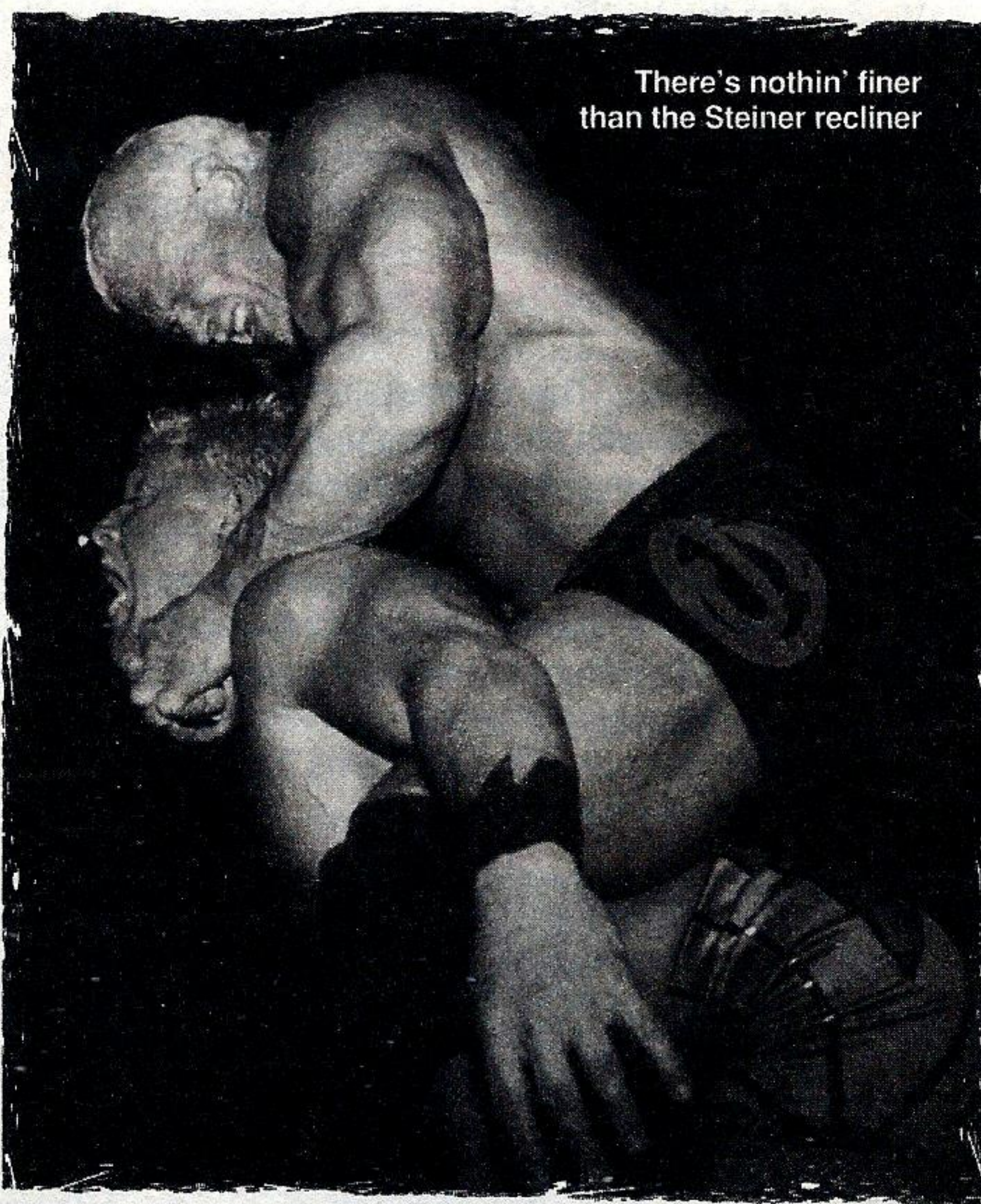
IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Val Venis: "You know, Scott Steiner, you show an amazing lack of maturity for a man who's been in this business as long as you have. I know that sounds strange from a guy who spent his first two years in the WWF wearing a white towel, but that was a part of the show. That was professionalism. You, Steiner, have no professionalism. You don't have respect for this business or anyone in it. Well, 'Big Poppa Pump,' I'm gonna force you to respect me!"

Scott Steiner: "Val Venis! What a joke! Who is this guy, some kind of cartoon character? None of my hooches have ever seen his movies because the damn idiot didn't make any! And if he did make some pornos, I'm sure they'd all suck! What they need to do is get 'Big Poppa' in a movie with his freaks and donate it to medical science!"

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Scott Steiner
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Val Venis
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Scott Steiner
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Scott Steiner
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Scott Steiner



BOTTOM LINE

Intimidation? Maybe. Maybe not. Either way, "Big Poppa Pump" was the runaway winner in this "Faceoff," 4-1. THE WRESTLER nearly reached a unanimous decision, but Will Welsh couldn't convince Dave Lenker to vote for Steiner just for health's sake. Steiner is more experienced and far more ruthless than Venis. The former U.S. champion would defeat the Intercontinental champion with a Steiner recliner.

Chris **BENOIT** VS

No. 3 vs. No. 3

Chris Benoit and Jeff Jarrett were bitter enemies in WCW. Benoit had been awarded the U.S. championship at Starrcade '99 when Scott Hall forfeited the title due to injury. Jarrett defeated Benoit for the belt only 24 hours later. Benoit beat Sid Vicious for the WCW World title in January and, with Jarrett demanding an immediate shot, it looked as if their feud would reach its climax. But Benoit abandoned the WCW title and jumped to the WWF, leaving his conflict with Jarrett unsettled ... until now.

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Chris Benoit: "The Canadian Crippler" is smart enough to stick with what's working for him during a match. If two stomps in the corner do damage to his opponent, why not stomp him seven or eight more times? Competitors afraid of grappling with Benoit on the mat have chosen falls-count-anywhere and other specialty matches, hoping he would come up short as a brawler. No problem. He'll clamp on the Crippler crossface *after* he rams his opponent's head into the restroom's hand dryer.

Jeff Jarrett: "The Chosen One" is a determined athlete as well, but his persistence doesn't necessarily translate into in-ring intensity. Jarrett's strategies encompass not only his wrestling matches, but boardroom meetings, contract negotiations, TV promos, and ambush attacks. Jarrett views the entire realm of pro wrestling, not just the squared circle, as his battleground. His brand of mental warfare doesn't begin when the bell rings. It begins as soon as the contract is signed. Remember that guy named Hulk Hogan?

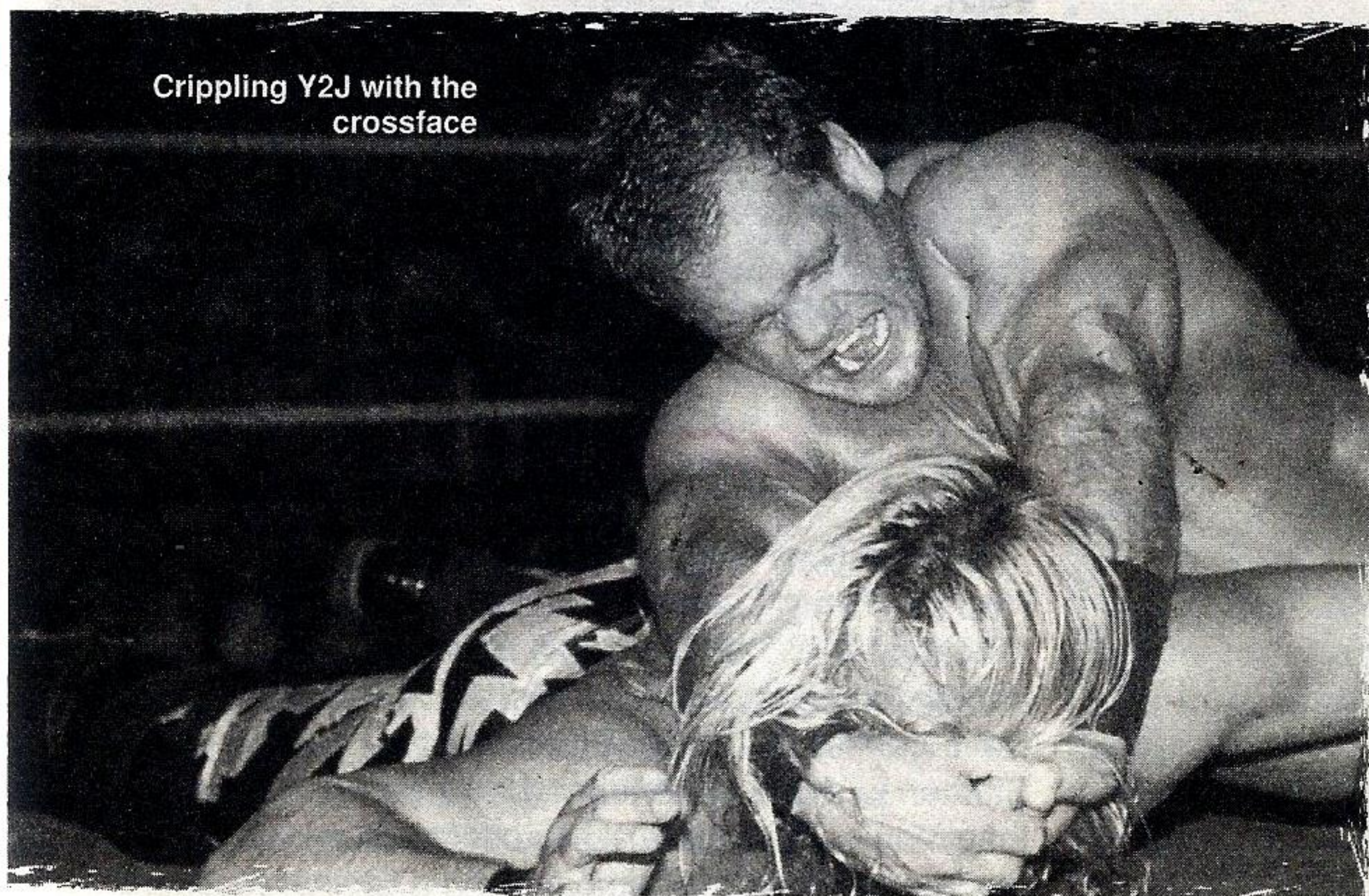
ACHILLES HEELS

Chris Benoit: The ability to focus is one of Benoit's greatest assets, but sometimes his focus becomes too narrow. He watches opponents with cat-like eyes, ready to pounce at the first opportunity. He ignores the crowd, the announcers, and bystanders at ringside. He becomes oblivious to the world around him, concerned only with inflicting damage upon his opponent. That makes him vulnerable to outside interference. Because Benoit is so preoccupied with his own offense, he's open to cheap shots from his foes.

Jeff Jarrett: His slight build and average physique places him at a disadvantage, even against smaller foes such as Benoit. He's easily outmuscled and usually takes a pounding before capitalizing on his opponent's mistakes. If Jarrett's opponent has the same level of technical knowledge and ring savvy, "The Chosen One" gets in real trouble.

GAME PLAN

Chris Benoit: Aware that Jarrett might be his equal in terms of scientific wrestling, Benoit would use brawling tactics to gain the advantage. He would punch Jarrett repeatedly at the outset and follow that with



Crippling Y2J with the crossface

VS. Jeff JARRETT

kicks and stomps in the corner. Benoit would find it easy to execute a series of rolling German suplexes on Jarrett's 230-pound frame. After that's done, he would go for the Crippler crossface. He would be sure to apply it in the middle of the ring since Jarrett always knows his ring position.

Jeff Jarrett: He would target Benoit's back, using forearm shots and over-the-knee backbreakers to neutralize "The Crippler." Later in the match, he would use the Boston crab and camel clutch. Attacking Benoit's back would not only keep him on the defensive, but it would limit his ability to execute any of his suplexes, especially the rolling German suplex. To capitalize on Ben-

oit's injured back, Jarrett would reverse his own stroke finisher into a standard Russian legsweep.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Chris Benoit: "Jeff Jarrett, as soon you arrived in WCW, you started complaining about the good ol' boy network. I was the victim of the good ol' boy network as much as anyone, and from where I'm standing, you're the biggest good ol' boy of all. You robbed me of the U.S. title and did your best to screw me out of the WCW belt. Those days are long behind me, but I can't resist a chance to stomp a mudhole in you again."

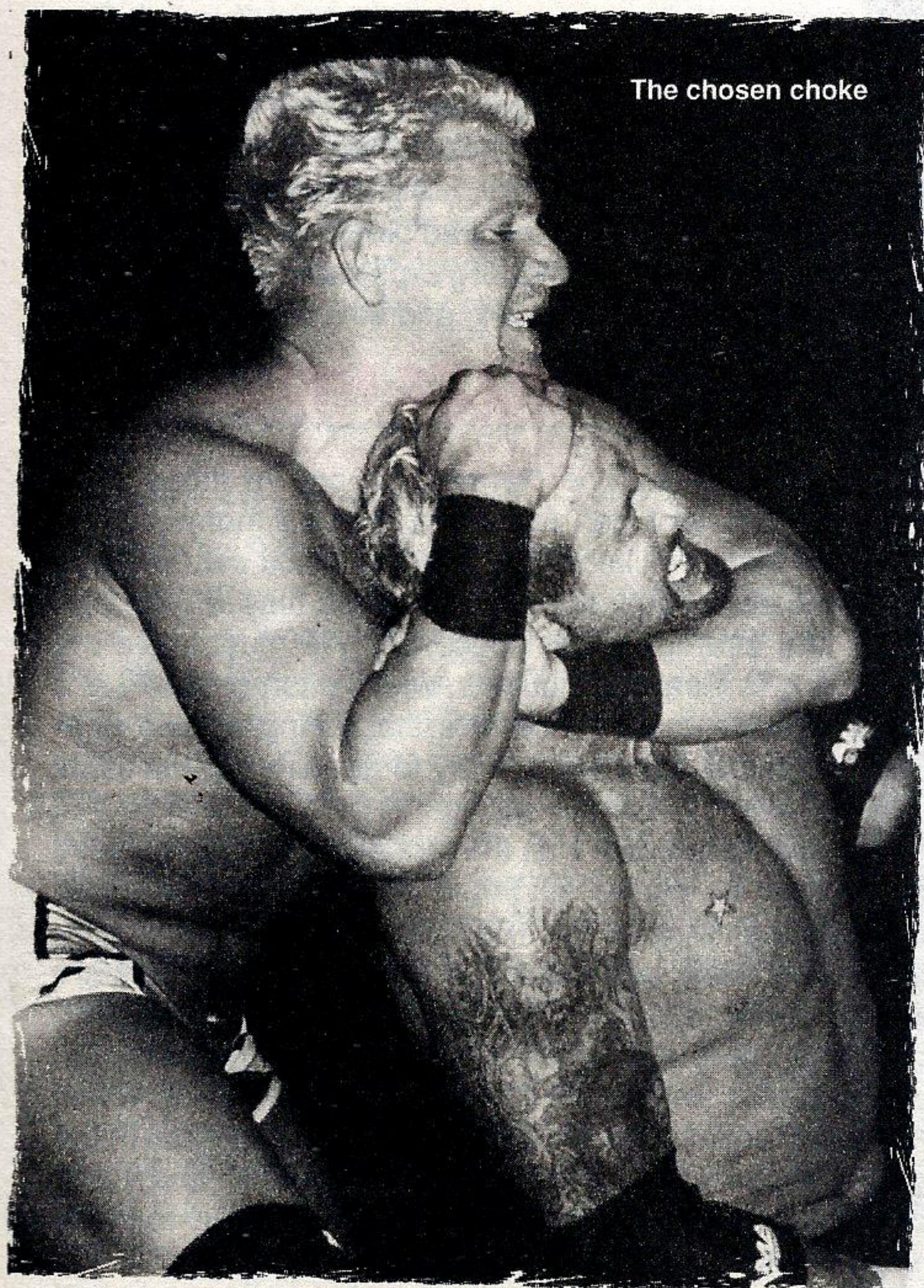
Jeff Jarrett: "Listen up, slappy. It seems to me that 'The Chosen One' played a tune on your head the last time we met. I ran you out of WCW. You couldn't stand it, because I have all the stroke in this damn place. You think you're a big deal in the WWF. I dominated the WWF until I ran out of challenges. I'm willin' to face you one more time, not because I think you're a challenge, but because I hate your Canadian slap-ass!"

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Jeff Jarrett
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Chris Benoit
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Jeff Jarrett
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Chris Benoit
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Jeff Jarrett

BOTTOM LINE

Jarrett and Benoit are both 14-year veterans who are in the midst of the hottest streaks of their careers. Both are former WCW World, WCW U.S., and WWF Intercontinental champions. On paper, it seems Benoit would have an easy time with Jarrett. But it looked that way for Sid Vicious, Kevin Nash, and Hulk Hogan, too. Jarrett has that crucial intangible: cunning. Somehow, Jarrett would beat Benoit, even if he had to rely on his guitar to do it.



The chosen choke

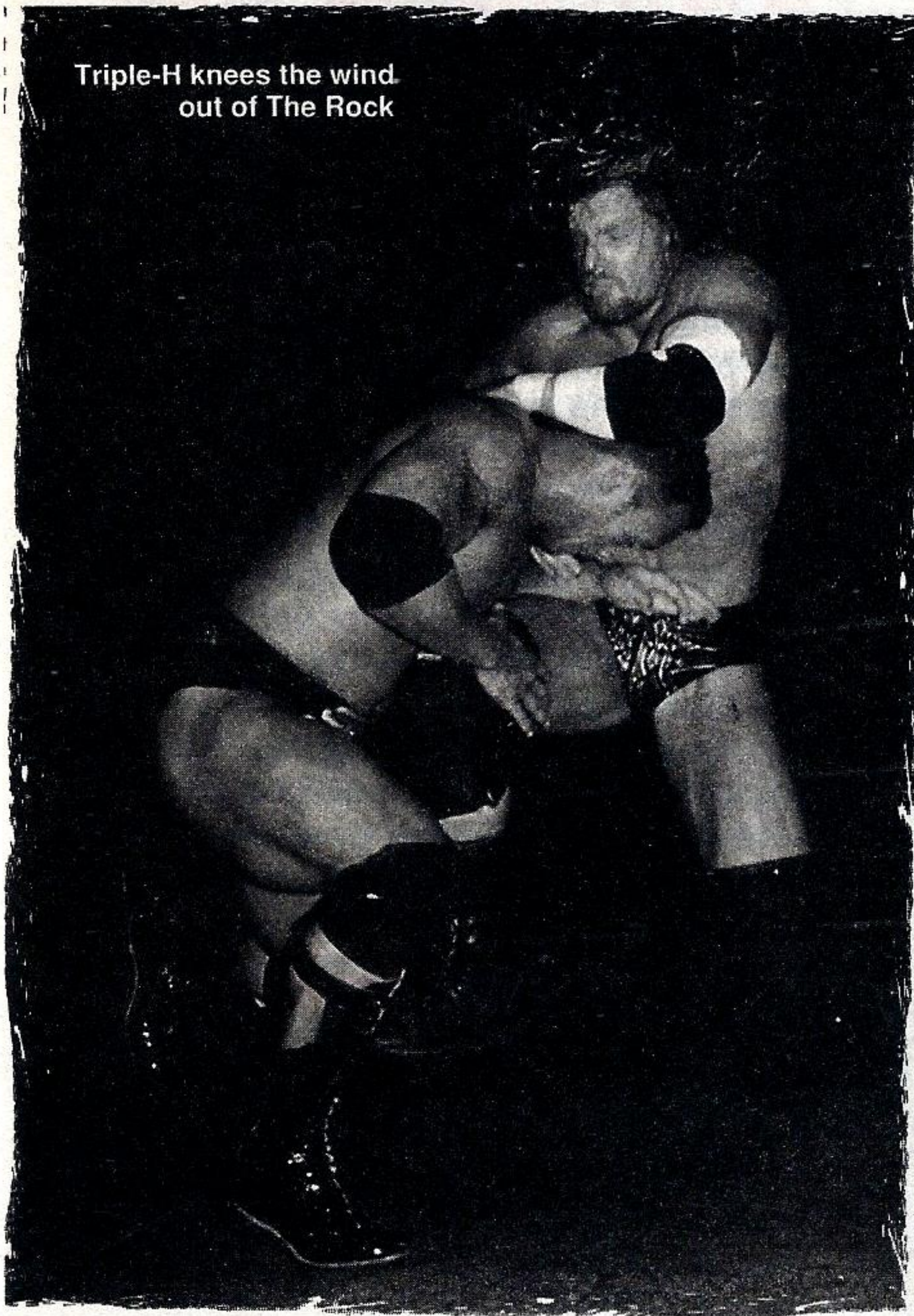
TRIPLE-H

V

No. 4 vs. No. 4

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Triple-H knees the wind
out of The Rock



Triple-H's ruthlessness combined with his political savvy (marrying the boss' daughter) made him the headline story during the first half of 2000. Goldberg's in-ring dominance is as pronounced as ever, but injuries and behind-the-scenes rancor have prevented him from reclaiming the top spot he owned 18 months ago. Goldberg would drive Triple-H to the limit physically, but "Da Man" could learn from the master—inside and outside the ring. These men will likely battle for the "Faceoff" top spot in the future.

Triple-H: The former WWF champ has a rare character trait among the sport's leading rulebreakers: guts. He hangs with DX and aligns himself with Vince McMahon not out of cowardice, but to benefit from a stacked deck. He was the victim of that stacked deck for many years, but once he became WWF champion, decided to use the system to full advantage. He's the same in the ring. He'd have the intestinal fortitude to face Goldberg nose-to-nose, but he wouldn't hesitate to hit him below the belt.

Bill Goldberg: The ex-Atlanta Falcon instigated a confrontation with "The Game" at a recent licensing convention, causing spectators to look on in fear. No one is sure what Goldberg's intentions were, but we can speculate that he was trying to intimidate Triple-H. Goldberg has no plans to jump to the WWF imminently, but professional rivalry and jealousy may have inspired him to cause the scene. Intimidation is Goldberg's primary asset, and he uses it well ... in the ring and at conventions.

ACHILLES HEELS

Triple-H: "The Game" isn't one of those competitors who can reverse a match's momentum in an instant—like X-Pac and The Rock can. Being a master strategist, Triple-H needs time to reformulate strategy when necessary. He must leave the ring to clear his thoughts, which often puts him at a disadvantage. While he's staggering around ring-side, his opponent is likely to run him into the steps or over the security railing.

Bill Goldberg: Has the former WCW champ faced a man as clever as Triple-H? Consider his major opponents since his 1997 debut: Hollywood Hogan, Kevin Nash, and Scott Hall are a few. Yes, they are opportunists, but they aren't geniuses. Bret Hart might be the smartest wrestler Goldberg has faced, and that resulted in the Starrcade swerve in which Hart retained the WCW belt. Triple-H is brilliant in the tradition of Ric Flair, Nick Bockwinkel, and Larry Zbyszko. Can Goldberg combat that? He remains untested.

S. Bill **GOLDBERG**

GAME PLAN

Triple-H: At first, Triple-H would resemble a human pinball. Helmsley would allow Goldberg to expend much of his energy on running tackles, clotheslines, and shoulderblocks. The ex-WWF champ would roll to the outside to catch a breather, luring Goldberg to the floor. Triple-H would capitalize on Goldberg's inexperience by using chairs, ring-posts, the timekeeper's bell, and anything else at his disposal. He would opt for a long match, knowing Goldberg has rarely gone beyond 10 minutes.

Bill Goldberg: His match strategy is the same regardless of the opponent. He would hit Triple-H with clotheslines and tackles at the outset. When fatigued, he would wrestle Triple-H to the mat with an armlock. An old-fashioned headlock could be particularly effective. Limiting the blood flow to Triple-H's brain might cause him to think less clearly and make him wobbly. That would be the perfect setup for the spear.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Triple-H: "There's been something puzzling me for a long time. What's so special about Goldberg? Here's a guy who spent most of his NFL career sitting on the bench and has spent literally half of his wrestling career sitting at home, and this is the guy who's supposed to save WCW and be the future of this industry? What a joke. You earn a name in this business by working your ass off night after night, whether the management appreciates you or not. Does Goldberg want it that bad? I don't think so."

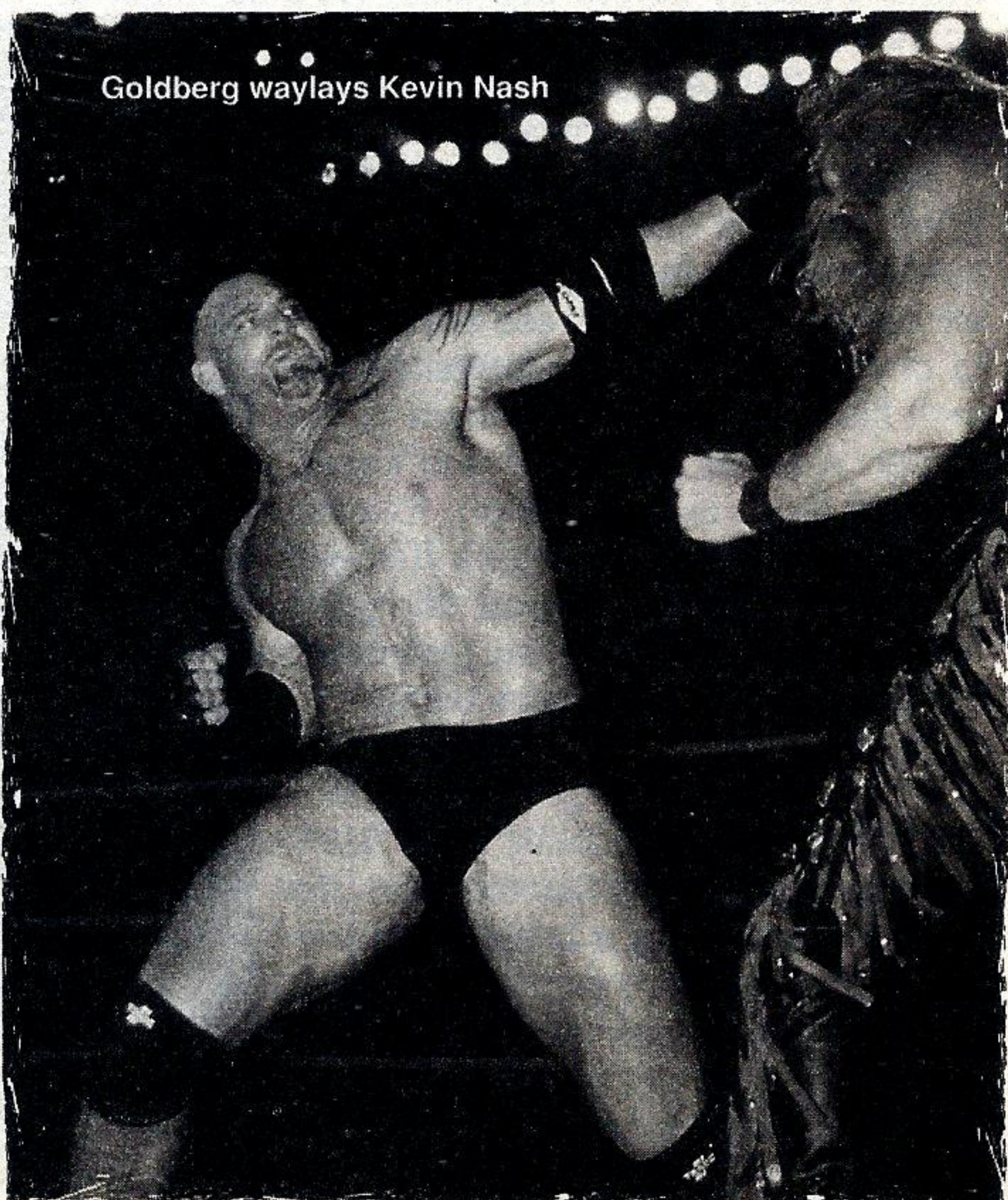
Bill Goldberg: "Triple-H makes me sick. That's why I got in his face at that convention. He's never met anyone with my athletic skill or my ability, so where does he get off judging me? To hear Triple-H talk, you would think it was a virtue to work your ass off without getting anywhere. He just can't stand the fact that I achieved in one year what it took him five years to achieve. But I don't consider myself ahead of schedule. I consider Triple-H four years behind."

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Bill Goldberg
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Triple-H
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Bill Goldberg
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Triple-H
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Triple-H

BOTTOM LINE

Bill Goldberg has only three official losses in his career: one to Kevin Nash and two to Bret Hart. We're adding an unofficial fourth: his "Faceoff" loss to Triple-H. Goldberg has been on the disabled/disgruntled list for too long. Triple-H, on the other hand, has captured four WWF World titles, retired Mick Foley, and was victorious at WrestleMania 2000. The pedigree wouldn't be enough to pin Goldberg, but a pedigree on a steel chair would be. Triple-H does whatever it takes.



Goldberg waylays Kevin Nash

Chris JERICO VS

No. 5 vs. No. 5

It would have been a *Nitro* mismatch only a few years ago, but a Chris Jericho-Kevin Nash encounter might be the most intriguing match of this year's "Faceoff." Jericho's star appears to be shining brighter than Nash's right now, but does that stardom translate into physical dominance? Jericho is 5'10" and 225 pounds. Nash is 7' and 356 pounds. Can Jericho overcome those gigantic odds?

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Chris Jericho: Y2J employs an interesting game of tactical offense and retreat. He feels out his opponent, sometimes gunning low for the knees and sometimes going to the air with a series of missile dropkicks. He pursues the offense that seems most effective at the time. Jericho doesn't formulate a particular strategy before bell time. He's so much at home in the ring that it isn't necessary. That's why he's been successful against a wide variety of opponents.

Kevin Nash: The former WCW and WWF champ's offense is predictable, but there's a reason why. It's been so effective that he doesn't see any reason to change it. He uses clotheslines to rock his foes, then slings them to the corner. A series of elbows and knees, usually three in succession, follows. Then the thumbs-and-fingers frameup and *bam!*—another elbow for good measure. That'll break a jaw faster than any huracanrana or swanton bomb.

ACHILLES HEELS

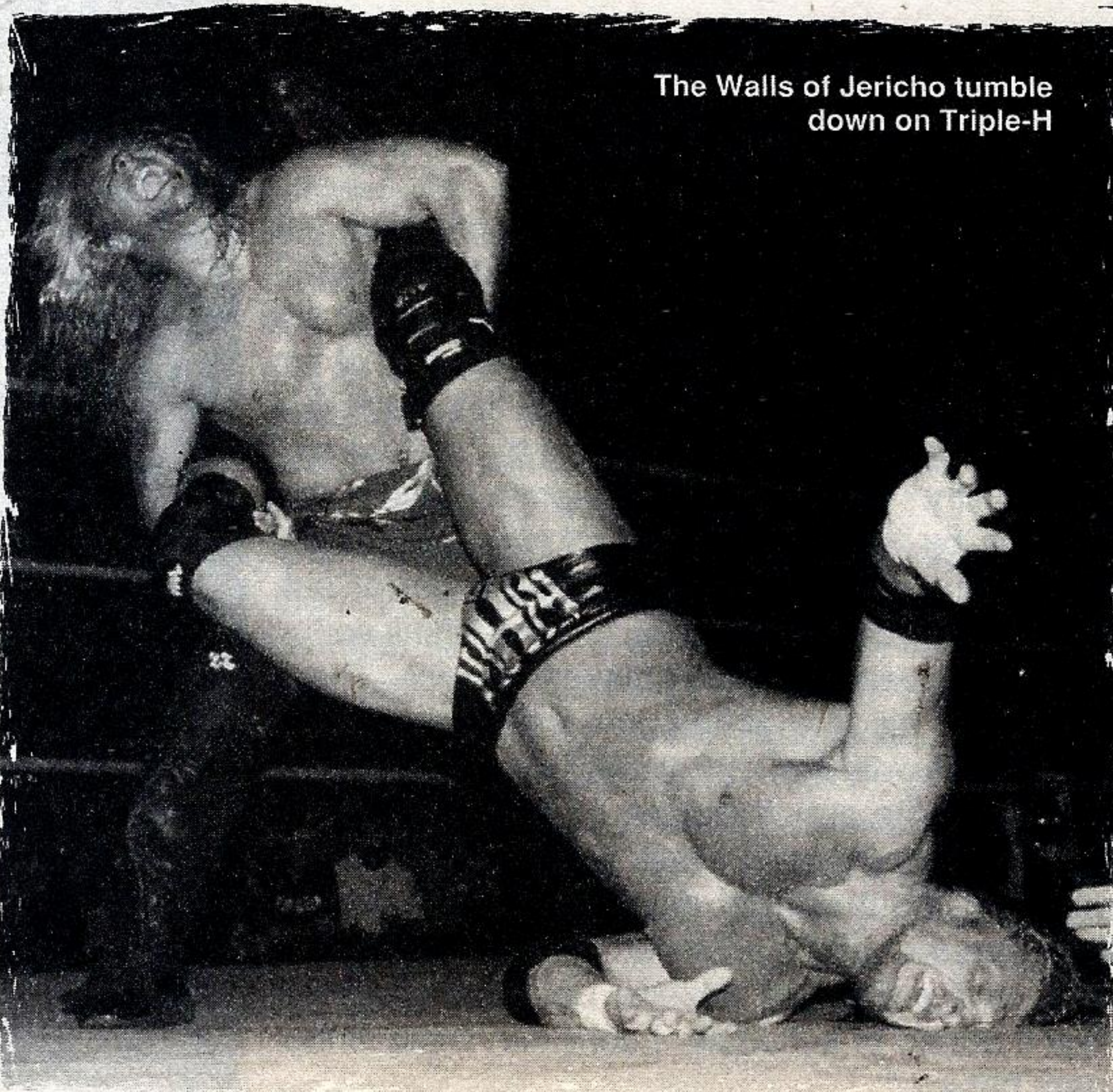
Chris Jericho: He has the heart of a lion but the body of a cruiserweight. In the heat of battle, he often loses his cool and flails away at his opponent with ineffective right hands and uppercuts. An attempted whip into the ropes is usually reversed by a stronger foe,

who can level Jericho with a clothesline or big boot. In frustration, Jericho might go to his primary aerial moves too soon. Bigger men convert his flying body-presses into over-the-knee backbreakers and his Lou Thesz presses into power bombs.

Kevin Nash: It's something a lot of basketball players and wrestlers have in common: bad knees. Unfortunately for Nash, who played college basketball, his knees are doubly painful. A chop block from behind or a dropkick to the knee can leave Nash writhing in pain on the mat or the arena floor. That makes it difficult to execute the power bomb, his finishing move.

GAME PLAN

Chris Jericho: Y2J would dropkick Nash's knees immediately, knowing "Big Sexy" wouldn't be fast enough to counter his lunging motions. As Nash grasped his kneecaps, Jericho would go behind and kick the backs of Nash's legs. The Walls of Jericho



The Walls of Jericho tumble down on Triple-H

S. Kevin NASH

would work against Nash's legs and back, but Jericho would be wise to go for a more effective finisher: the spinning toehold. The relentless twisting motion of that hold, rather than the locking characteristic of the figure-four, would be excruciating for Nash.

Kevin Nash: He would try to send Jericho down with boots to the face, clotheslines, and bodyslams. Nash's strategy would be to keep Jericho grounded and punish him with elbowsmashes and legdrops. He would hoist Jericho by the throat and deplete his air supply edge. He would also save the power bomb for last, hoping that a fatigued Jericho could not kick out.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Chris Jericho: "Hey, jerky, I remember when you said I wasn't in your league. I remember you

saying I wasn't one of the big boys. You know what? You were right. I'm not in your league, because you happen to be 20,000 leagues under the sea, pally! And I'm not one of the big boys, either, because I'm certainly not an oaf who lumbers around the ring and induces insomniacs into unconsciousness! This time, Nash, you're going to finally entertain the fans by being my personal whipping boy!"

Kevin Nash: "Is this little Chrissy Jericho, that kid who ran around here asking for autographs? Am I supposed to fight that guy? That's like going to the playground and beating up the most helpless nerd there. As long as the money's good, I'll do it. I just hope little Chrissy's parents have his medical and dental coverage paid up. I'm gonna feel kinda bad about hurting the young lad. But, hey, it's a livin'."

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Kevin Nash

Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Chris Jericho

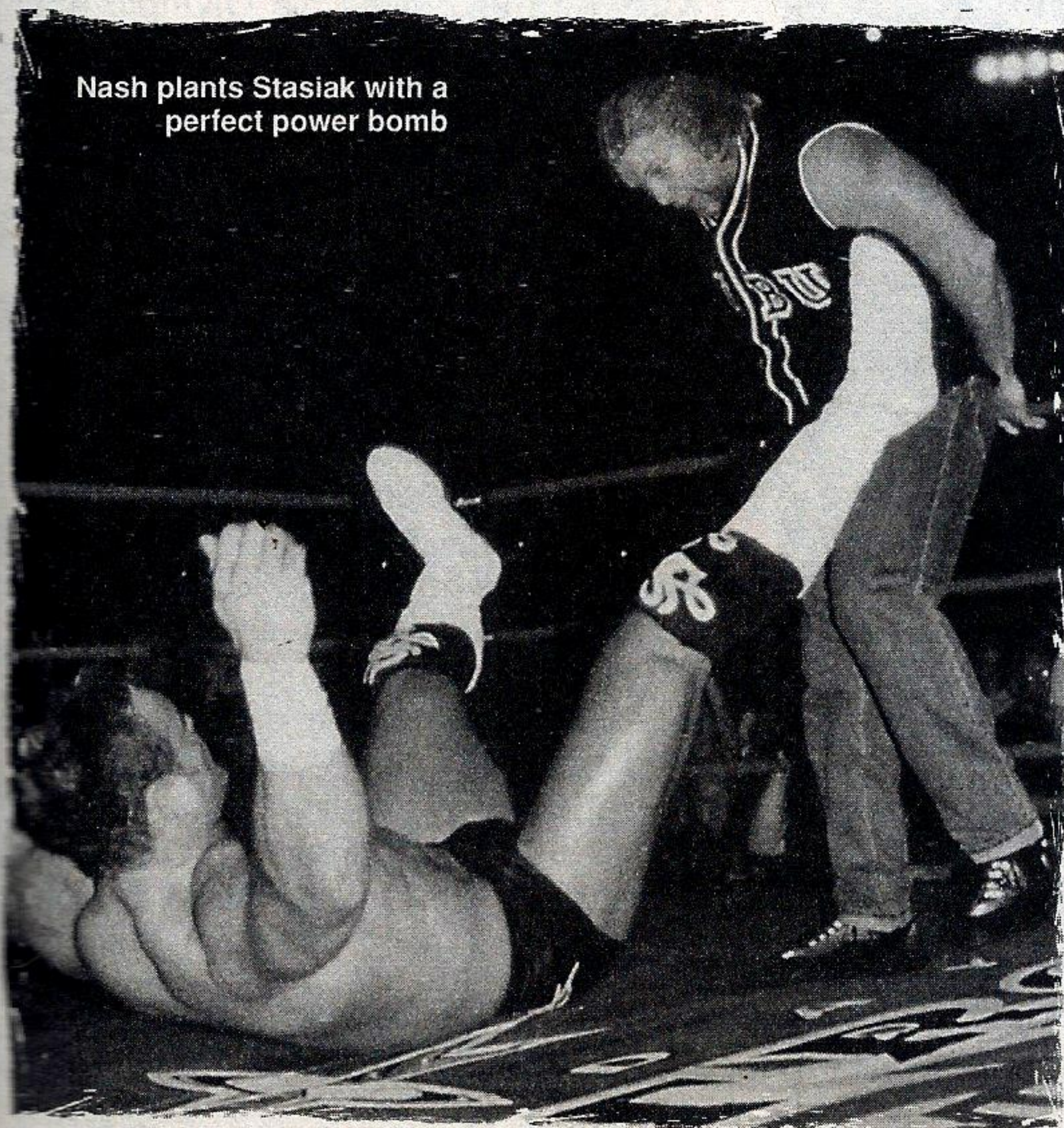
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Chris Jericho

Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Chris Jericho

Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Kevin Nash

BOTTOM LINE

Someday, the prognosticators said, the young and fast guys in this sport are going to catch up to the bigger and stronger guys. The result of this match, with Jericho defeating Nash, proves that day is here. Two years ago, there would have been no shame in Jericho losing to Nash. Today, Jericho losing to Nash would be a major career setback. That says a lot about how far Jericho has come. Y2J would force Nash to submit to either the Walls of Jericho or a spinning toehold.



Nash plants Stasiak with a perfect power bomb

Kurt **ANGLE** VS.

No. 6 vs. No. 6

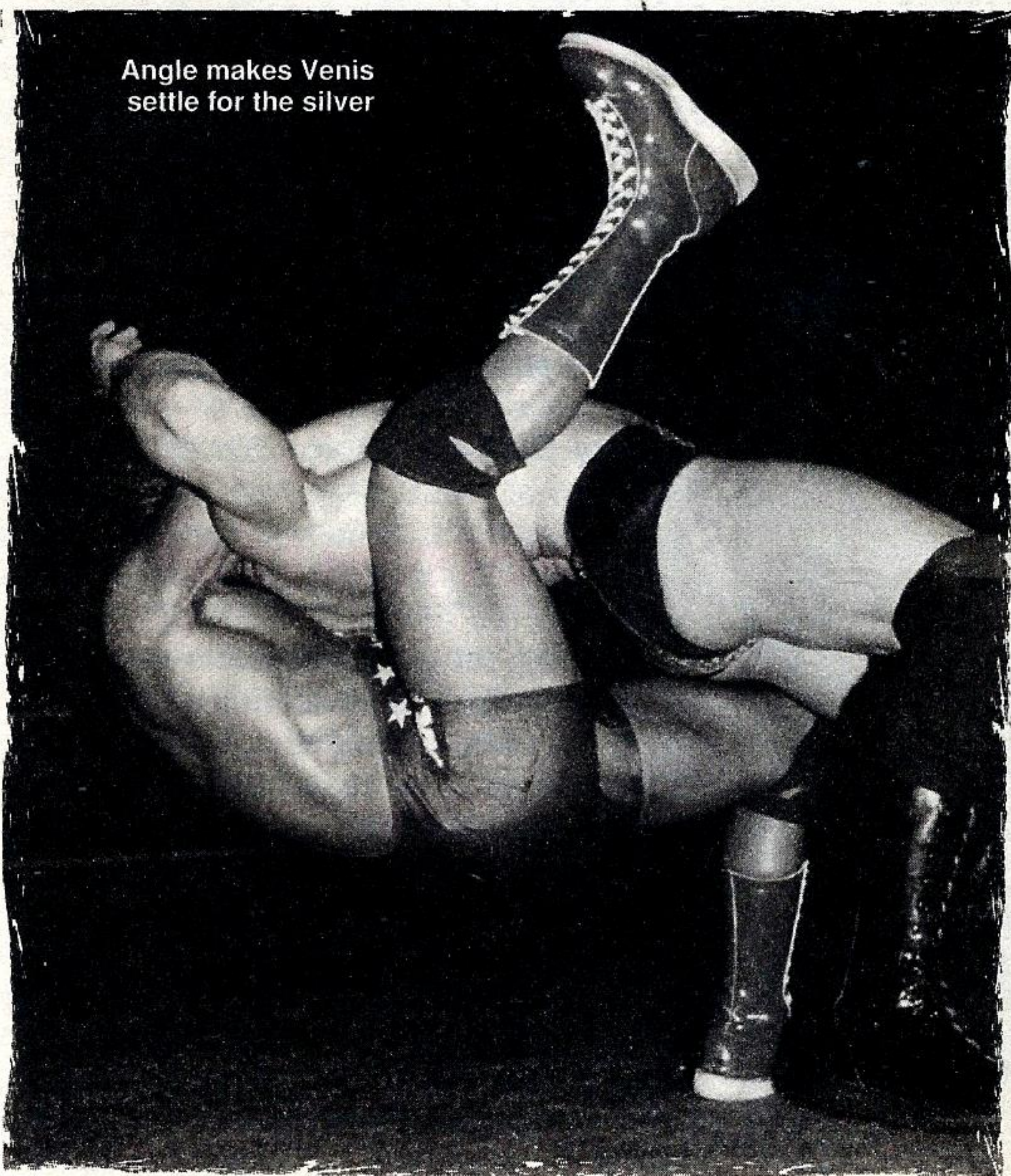
Kurt Angle and Mike Awesome were the most talked-about superstars to emerge in 1999. Their success continued in 2000, with Angle wearing the WWF's Intercontinental and European belts simultaneously and Awesome reigning as ECW World champion before jumping to WCW. Both remain in the world title pictures of their respective federations. In this "Faceoff," it's scientific excellence and sheer cunning vs. amazing agility and raw power.

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Kurt Angle: The Olympic gold medalist is equally prepared to face larger and smaller foes. An excel-

lent mat wrestler, Angle knows how to use leverage and balance to bring all opponents down to a workable size. A well-executed fireman's carry can bring a man down whether he's 5'10" or 6'10". In fact, Angle knows how to use his opponents' weight against them, using either the belly-to-belly suplex or the Olympic slam.

Mike Awesome: Confidence often makes big men lazy as they realize how much harder smaller men have to work just to reach the same level. Awesome doesn't make that mistake. He's the most intense big man in the sport, combining the relentlessness of Chris Benoit with the high-impact moves and pure strength employed by The Undertaker. Awesome is at his best when his opponent makes him angry. Getting angry wouldn't be difficult against Kurt Angle.



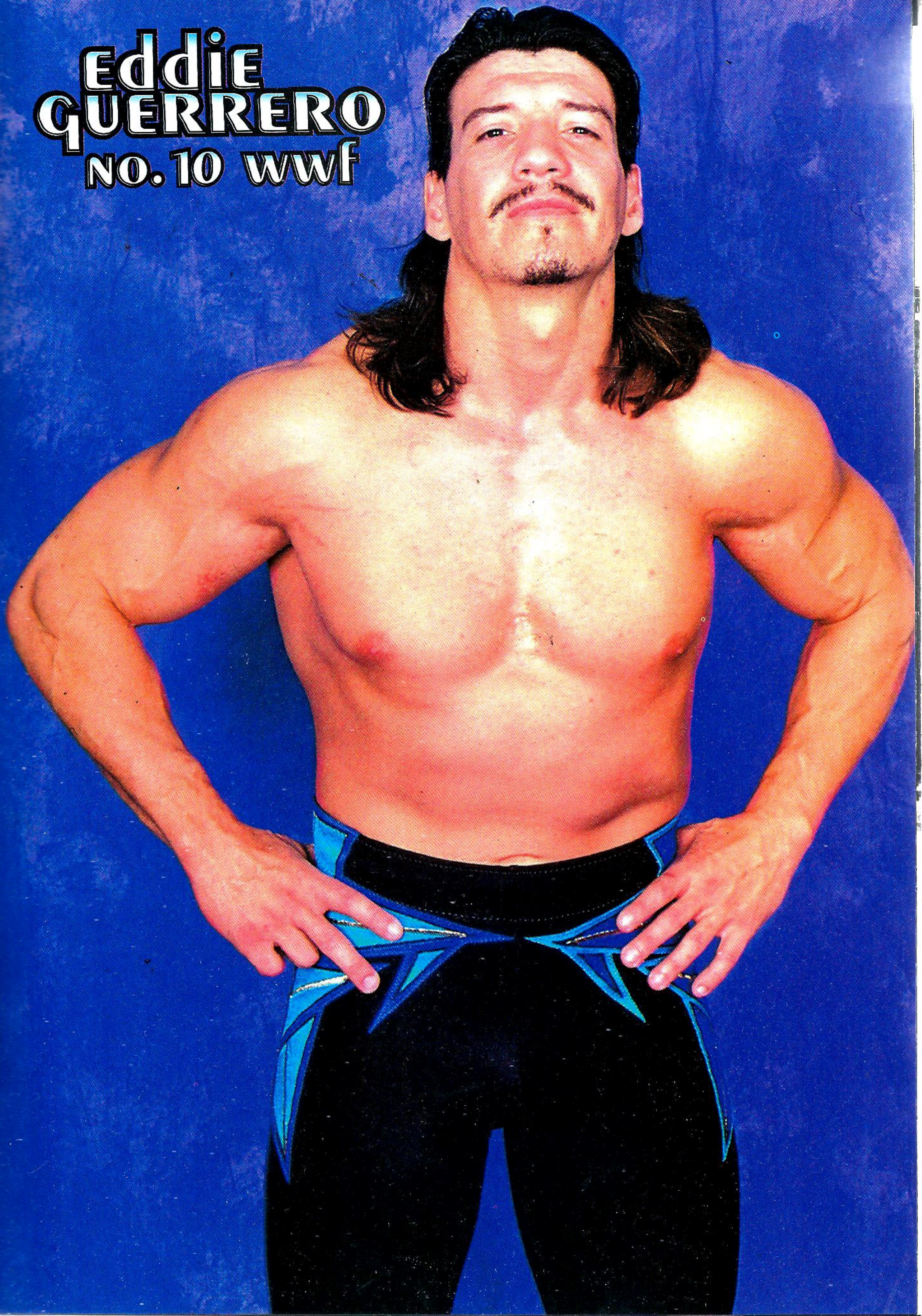
Angle makes Venis settle for the silver

ACHILLES HEELS

Kurt Angle: For all his Olympic and amateur success and his Intercontinental and European title reigns, Angle doesn't really know what it's like to compete at the highest level of pro wrestling. He's never headlined a pay-per-view or carried the burden of an entire company as its champion. Would he choke against a former world champion such as Awesome? He's been reluctant to face The Rock, Triple-H, The Undertaker, and others in the WWF. As crazy as it might sound, does Angle lack confidence?

Mike Awesome: Because of his strength *and* agility, Awesome has become known for his high-impact maneuvers, most of which are delivered from the top rope and involve tables. He would find it difficult to employ those moves against Kurt Angle since the Olympian would want to keep Awesome on the mat with various submission holds. If Angle were successful at keeping Awesome grounded, "The Career Killer" might never get off the mat—let alone climb the ropes.

Eddie
GUERRERO
NO. 10 WWF



NO. 8 WCW.
VAMPIRO



MIKE AWESOME

GAME PLAN

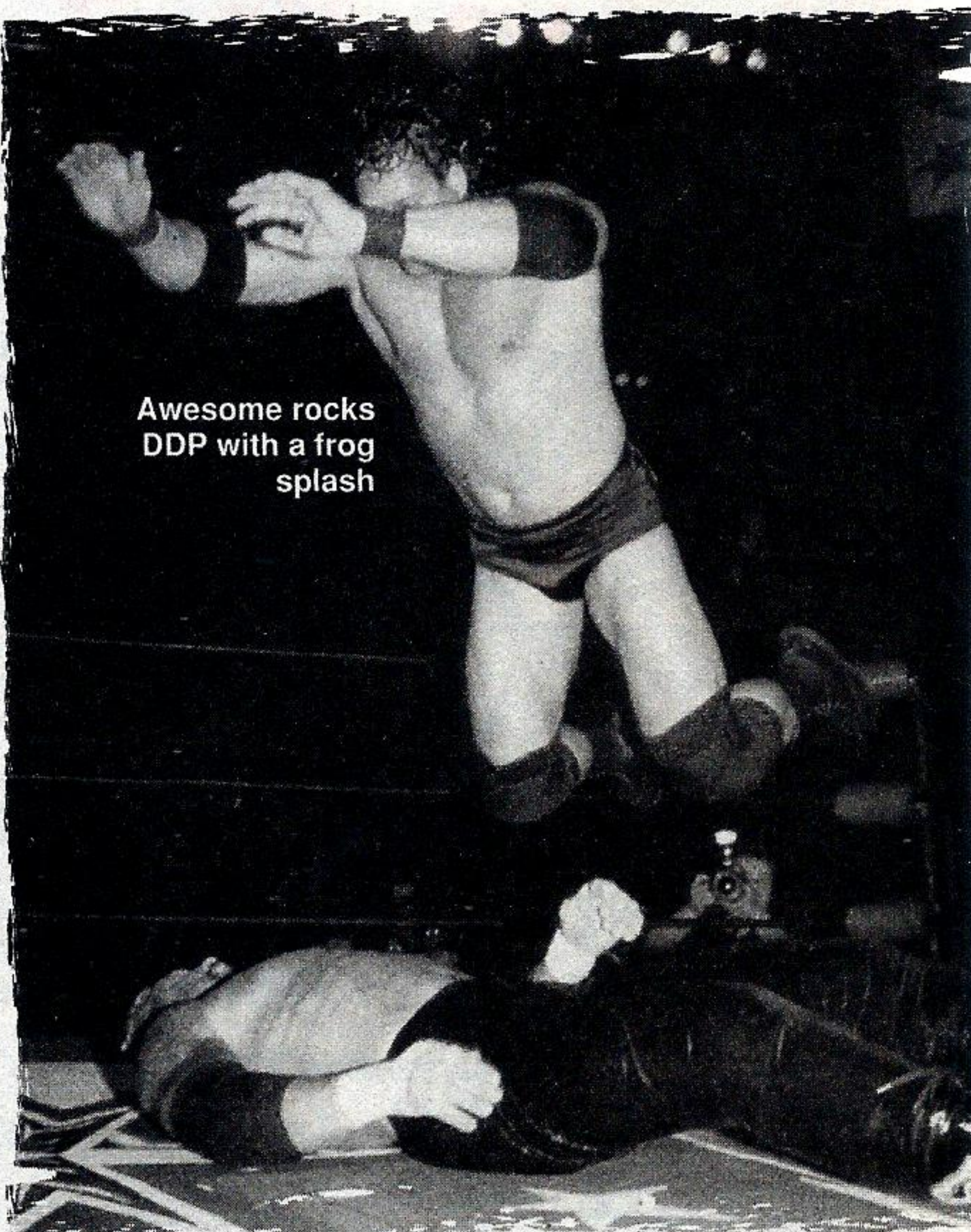
Kurt Angle: The 2000 King of the Ring would try to shake Awesome's confidence at the outset. The triumphant entrance, cocky prematch comments, and arrogant demeanor give Angle an aura of invincibility before the bell sounds. Awesome is off to an unsteady start in WCW, making him believe that perhaps an ECW World champion really is "just another wrestler" in WCW or the WWF. Angle would further rattle Awesome by attempting several early pinfalls.

Mike Awesome: He thrived in ECW, where most of his opponents were far smaller than those he sees in WCW. Awesome would have the same advantage against Angle and would employ the same tried-and-true strategy. The former ECW champ would deck Angle with clotheslines and tackles, hoping to disorient Angle enough to prevent him from formulating match strategy. He would try to Awesome-bomb Angle through a table and to the concrete floor for good measure, then use a top-rope Awesome bomb in the ring.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Kurt Angle: "Now, seriously, I don't know if 'Awesome' is your given name. But if you chose 'Awesome' as your last name all by yourself, I would suggest that you might have some deep-rooted insecurities. You may be overcompensating just a bit. Mike 'Better-Than-Most' or Mike 'Average' might be more suitable names. If everyone were allowed to choose their last names, my name might be Kurt 'Magnificent' or Kurt 'Fabulous'. It's true. It's true."

Mike Awesome: "Let me tell ya somethin', Kurt Angle. I don't like you at all! You really make me mad! I just wanna grab you around the neck and throw you across the ring! I can't wait to get you on that top rope and power-bomb your Olympic ass through a table or, if you really make me mad, I'll do it double-decker style. Either way, you're goin' down!"



Awesome rocks DDP with a frog splash

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Mike Awesome
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Kurt Angle
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Kurt Angle
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Mike Awesome
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Kurt Angle

BOTTOM LINE

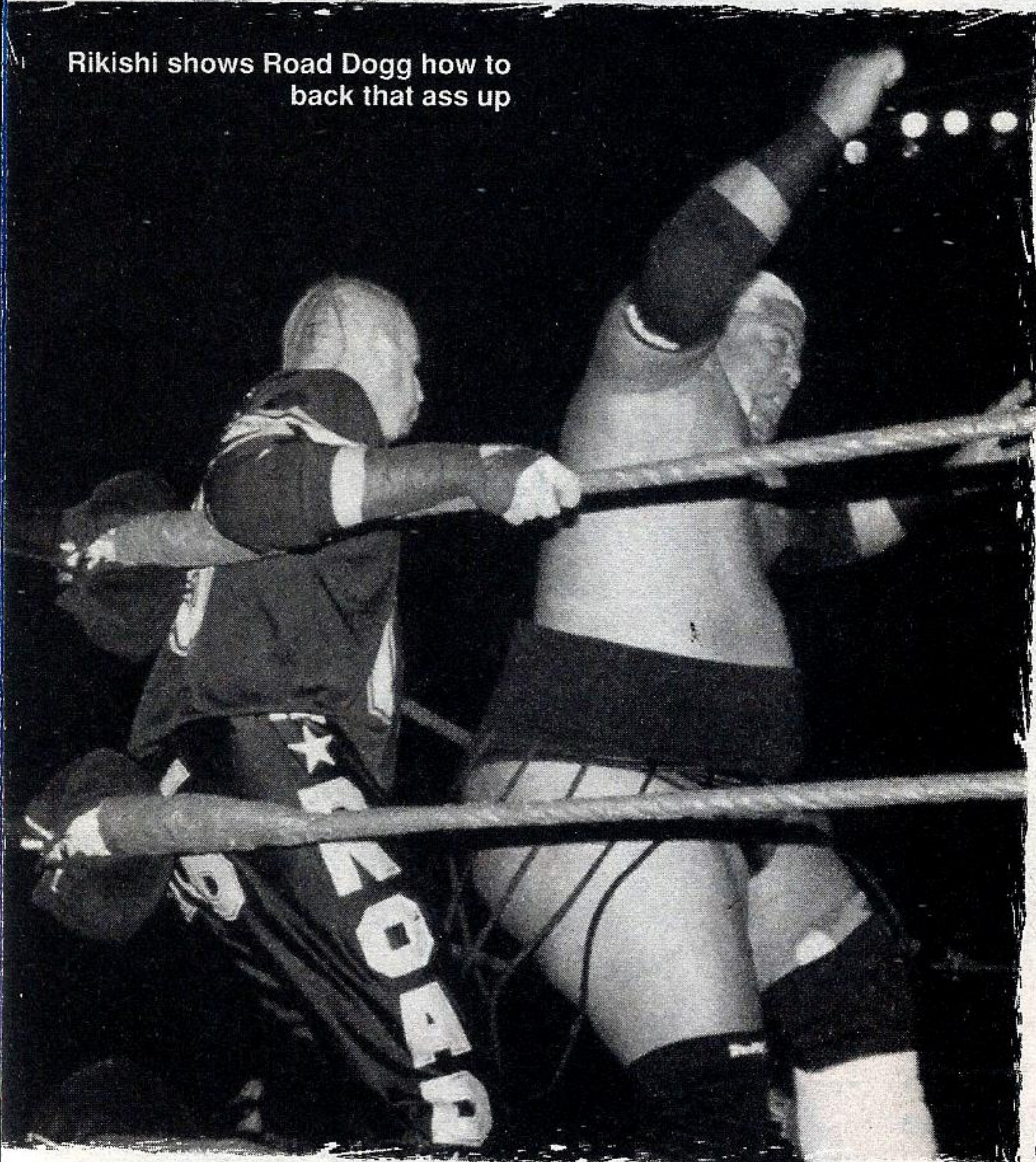
Mike Awesome was a dominant ECW champ, but his star power has been tarnished by lackluster performances in WCW. On the other hand, Olympian Kurt Angle—who wrestled in Memphis and in WWF dark matches for a year before bursting on the national scene—has done nothing but improve since his debut. His scientific knowledge would counter any daredevil feat Awesome might attempt, and that would be the key to Angle's victory.

RIKISHI

VS

No. 7 vs. No. 7

Rikishi shows Road Dogg how to
back that ass up



WWF champ, able to execute quick martial arts moves despite his bulk. Sidekicks and enzuigiris are not out of the question for Rikishi, who had the benefit of using an aerial style early in his career. He can steamroll opponents frontward by using a shoulderblock or backward by using the stink face.

Shane Douglas: Pure venom and hatred fuels "The Franchise." No doubt Douglas is resentful of Rikishi's enormous success, and that jealousy—if allowed to go unchecked—would turn Douglas into a savage willing to end Rikishi's career at any cost. He would concentrate on breaking Rikishi's leg or arm instead of trying to win the match. He'd make Val Venis look like a schoolyard brat.

ACHILLES HEELS

Rikishi: He's been able to adapt his style to suit his massive weight gain, but one aspect of his game has suffered tremendously: his cardiovascular conditioning. Rikishi can keep pace with Kane and The Undertaker at the 10-minute mark, but how would he do against Douglas, a 255-pounder? Not well. Douglas would prolong the match as long as possible, aware that Rikishi would grow more vulnerable by the minute.

Shane Douglas: The former ECW champ has suffered numerous injuries over the years; a broken arm, fractured wrist, dislocated elbow, and cracked palate are only a few. His X-rays could be sold as jigsaw puzzles. The wrong move at the wrong time could disable "The Franchise" for months. A particularly physical match, especially against a 421-pounder, would place his entire body at risk.

Shane Douglas might consider it demeaning to wrestle a man like Rikishi, and he would probably complain about it for the next several years. But it wouldn't take long for Douglas to realize there's more to Rikishi than a big butt and a cool dance step. How would "The Franchise" fare against a competitor nearly 200 pounds heavier? This would be a rare occasion for Douglas to find out.

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Rikishi: He's often compared to Yokozuna in terms of style, but that comparison is somewhat misguided. Rikishi is more versatile than the former

GAME PLAN

Rikishi: He would smother Douglas at every opportunity, splashing him in the turnbuckles, sitting on his chest, and crushing him with legdrops. He would go for the stink face fairly early, assuming that

S. SHANE DOUGLAS

a spitting and sputtering Douglas would be less able to mount a credible offense. Douglas' comical reactions to the stink face would encourage Rikishi to do it again and again.

Shane Douglas: "The Franchise" wouldn't hesitate to fire away at Rikishi's flabby chest with stinging chops and use Rikishi's ponytail to snapmare him to the canvas. He would avoid the vertical suplex in favor of pummeling Rikishi's temple with right hands. Later, he would focus on Rikishi's legs and knees, weakening them with the figure-four leglock. Instead of using the Franchiser, Douglas would opt for a figure-four submission.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Rikishi: "I haven't crossed paths with you too often, Shane Douglas, except when you were Dean Douglas here in the WWF. You didn't impress me then, and you don't impress me now. You're too much of a complainer and backstabber to earn my respect. You deserve the stink face as much as anybody. Pucker up, Douglas, because I'm about to back this ass up!"

Shane Douglas: "Has this business degenerated to the point that a man's fat, dimply ass makes him a superstar? Hell, if I knew that, I would've started eatin' Twinkies and showin' mine off years ago. I know it looks a helluva lot better than yours. Rikishi, you're a sorry excuse for a professional wrestler, and I'm going to show you what a real world

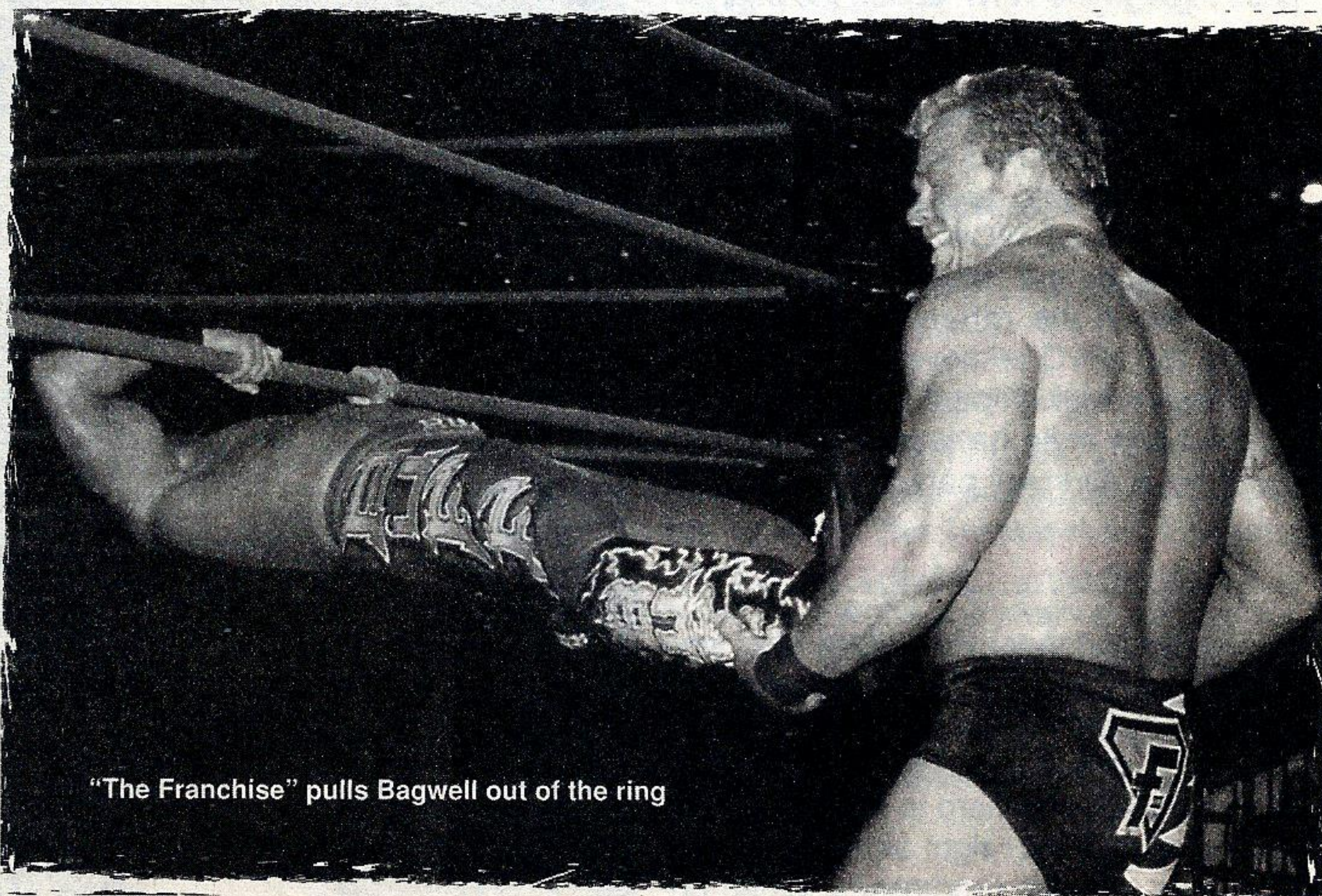
championship-caliber athlete is all about. Get ready to get that fat, obese, flabby ass Franchised!"

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Rikishi
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Rikishi
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Shane Douglas
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Shane Douglas
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Shane Douglas

BOTTOM LINE

Shane Douglas and Rikishi are smart veterans, logging almost 30 years in the sport between them. Rikishi would floor Douglas several times and might even knock the wind out of him. Douglas, however, would stoop to any depth to halt Rikishi's momentum, either by low blow, chair shot, or brass knuckles. Douglas' scientific superiority would be the deciding factor from that point, as Rikishi would struggle to escape "The Franchise's" best holds, ranging from the hammerlock to the figure-four.



"The Franchise" pulls Bagwell out of the ring

THE UNDERTAKER

V

No. 8 vs. No. 8

Vampiro has been compared to Sting countless times over the last several months, as the brothers-in-paint became enemies-in-blood. But there's a man who is even more similar to Vampiro than Sting. That man is The Undertaker, the original "Freak" of pro wrestling. The Undertaker, unlike Sting, has lived on the same dark side as Vampiro. Could WCW's young ghoul survive the WWF's perennial phenom?

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

The Undertaker: The former WWF champ has demonstrated an uncanny ability to change with the times, keeping pace with the mood of the fans. The Undertaker displays that same chameleon-like ability to adapt inside the ring. He can walk along the top rope, soar through the air, or slug it out biker bar-style. He has wrestled every major star to pass through the WWF during the past decade.

Vampiro: He isn't intimidated by so-called legends. To the fans' delight, he targeted established stars such as Sid Vicious, Ric Flair, and Lex Luger when he first entered WCW. Neither was he intimidated by the cold persona of Sting, who lived in the rafters for 15 months during the NWO takeover. He combines aggressive high-impact moves with the Lucha Libre style he learned in Mexico. Vampiro is diversity personified.

ACHILLES HEELS

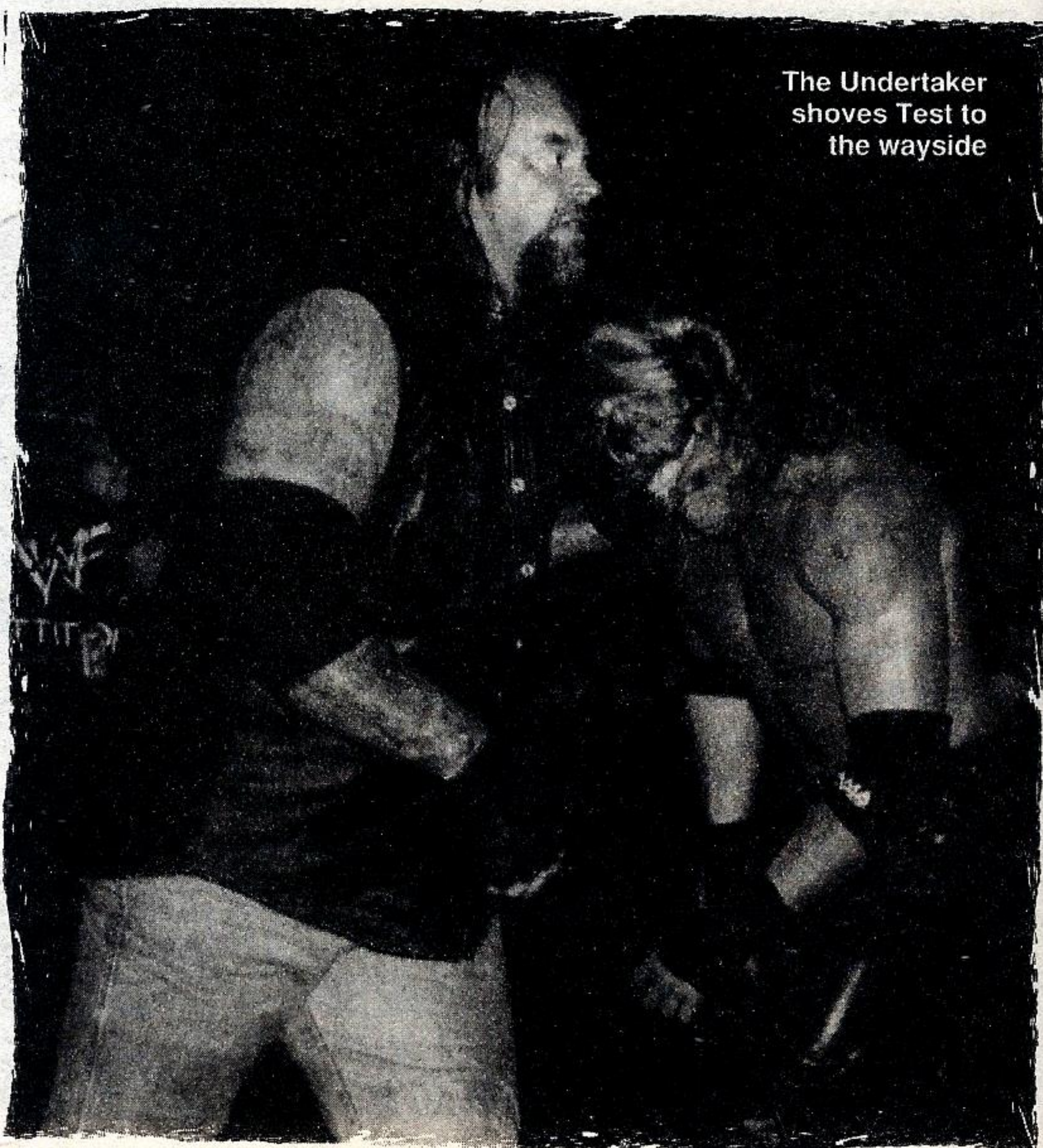
The Undertaker: He suffers from several nagging injuries, ranging from a bad ankle to a bum knee. His orbital bone, just below the eye socket, was broken a few years ago. It's hard to discern Undertaker's weak points right away, but it gets easier as a match progresses. When op-

ponents see 'Taker hobbling late in a match, they know where to strike. At that point, his weak points might as well have bull's eyes painted on them.

Vampiro: He's a relatively small freak, conceding almost 40 pounds to Sting and 100 pounds to The Undertaker. He is frequently overpowered and gets the worst of mid-ring collisions. When he does gain the advantage, due to a reversal or high-impact move of his own, he'll stand and shake with glee instead of capitalizing on his momentum. "Getting freaky with it" is more important than an attempted pinfall.

GAME PLAN

The Undertaker: Accustomed to facing larger opponents, The Undertaker would toy with Vampiro in the beginning, simply to show him who's in

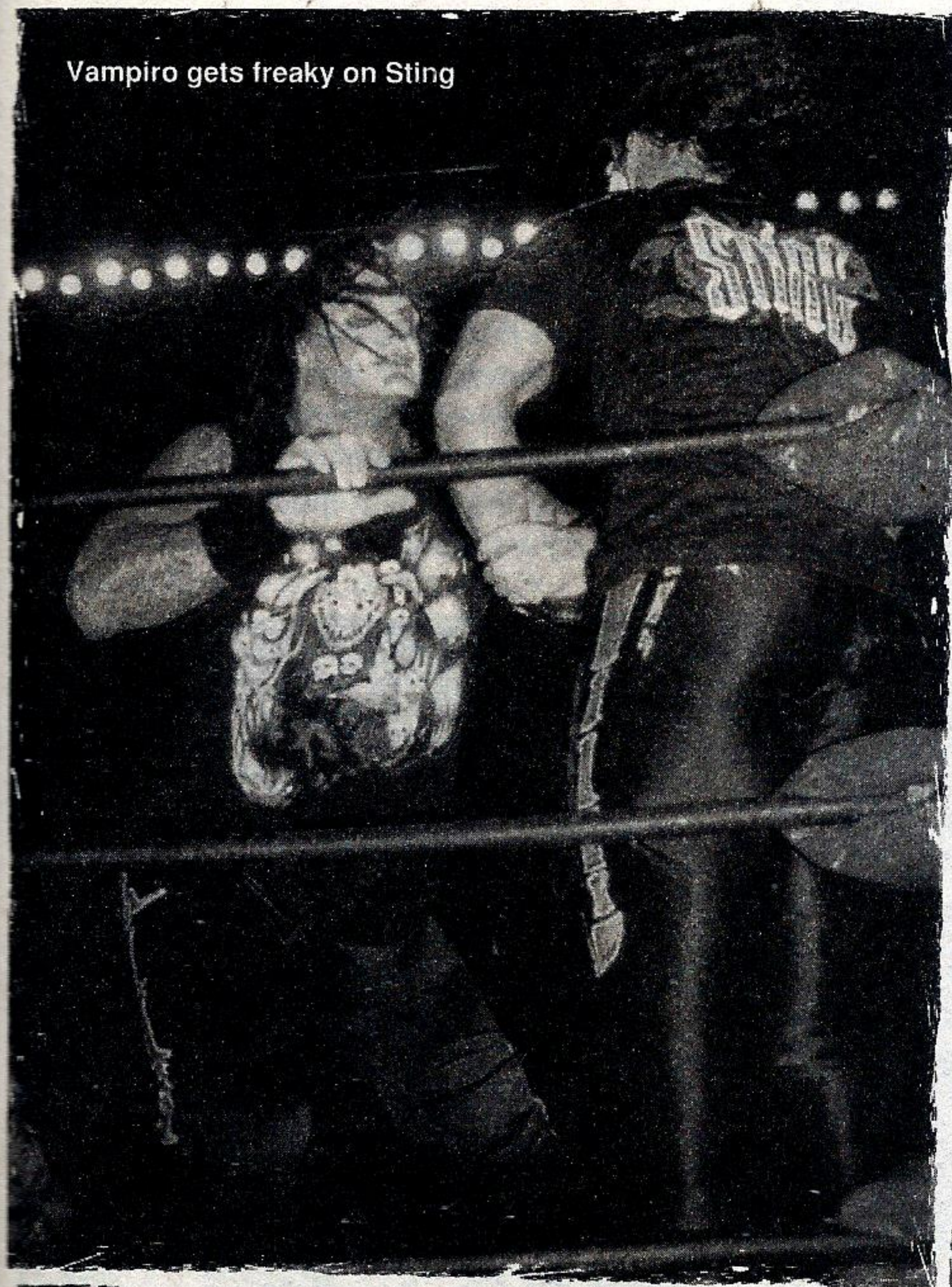


The Undertaker shoves Test to the wayside

\$.

VAMPIRO

Vampiro gets freaky on Sting



charge. Overhead press-slams and choke-slams would be standard fare. More than anything, Undertaker would enjoy pummeling Vampiro in the corner. Vampiro's light frame would make him susceptible to Undertaker's new finishing move, the last ride.

Vampiro: He would begin the match with mental warfare, using distorted facial expressions, his flapping tongue, and gyrating motions to annoy Undertaker. A swift kick to the midsection would allow Vampiro to gain the advantage. He would beat 'Taker at his own game by scaling the turnbuckles and walking along the top rope with ease. Since the 6'9" Undertaker would be too big for "The Freak's" nail in the coffin, Vampiro might choose the huracanrana or frog splash as his finisher.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

The Undertaker: "I don't know what cave you've been livin' in all these years, boy, but you must be crazy if you think you can scare The Undertaker. I spent my entire career scarin' the hell out of everybody in the WWF. You're livin' on the dark side? Hell, son, I created the dark side and built a house there, right on 13 Kick Your Ass Lane."

Vampiro: "I criticized Sting because he'd never been on the dark side, yet he pretended he had. I'll say this for you, Undertaker. You've been on the dark side, and you became the freakiest freak there. Then you turned soft. You caved in to the marketing and the merchandising that made Sting such a sellout. You've gone from being a phenom to being a marketing ploy used to sell Kid Rock albums. The Undertaker I once knew is dead."

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): The Undertaker

Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): The Undertaker

Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Vampiro

Will Welsh (Associate Editor): The Undertaker

Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): The Undertaker

BOTTOM LINE

Vampiro might be able to push around Dale Torborg in WCW, but he'd be foolish to try the same tactics against The Undertaker. Vampiro would be foolish to classify Undertaker as a washed up veteran while the man is still years away from his 40th birthday. Undertaker is getting stronger by the day—with his experience complementing his size and power—and Vampiro cannot compete with that combination either physically or mentally.

KANE

V

No. 9 vs. No. 9

Kane vs. Chris Canyon might be the oddest matchup in this year's "Faceoff." Could Canyon, "The Innovator Of Offense," find a way to penetrate Kane's fortress of muscle and mayhem? Would the Canyon cutter have any effect? Conversely, Kane could be at an intellectual disadvantage against someone as cunning and devious as Canyon. Regardless, Canyon is *positively* in for a rough time.

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Kane: "Ahhhhhh!" screams Jerry Lawler as the fire and brimstone of Kane's entrance makes everyone in the arena shudder. Fans have seen and heard that entrance hundreds of times, but it remains intimidating. Why? Because Kane is intimidating, no matter the packaging. He could wear a chicken outfit and come out to the *Leave It To Beaver* theme and still be frightening.

Chris Canyon: Few competitors are as good at improvising, and sometimes creating new maneuvers, during the course of a match. He's an astute student of the game who views videotapes of his opponents over and over again. That dedication to study and his acute observational skills made his impersonation of Dallas Page uncanny. Canyon could psych out Kane by impersonating another superstar. What about "Kanyon"?

ACHILLES HEELS

Kane: Whether it's because of a mental deficiency stemming from childhood or his natural naivete, Kane is prone to mental psych-out attempts. Canyon's only

chance of beating Kane would be to outsmart him, as Undertaker, Paul Bearer, X-Pac, and Tori have done on separate occasions. If Kane loses, it's more likely to be the result of a mental lapse than a physical weakness.

Chris Canyon: He is often carried away by his own momentum. When Canyon is on a roll, he'll forget crucial elements, namely defense. Canyon is so focused on his next move, he's almost complacent in regard to cheap shots or straightforward reversals by his foe. Yes, once Canyon gets into an offensive flurry, it's awfully hard to match him move for move, but a cheap shot can do wonders.

Kane kayoes Big Bossman



S. Chris KANYON

GAME PLAN

Kane: The former WWF champ would be smart enough to avoid a few of his typical moves, such as the clothesline and choke-slam, which the slippery Kanyon might be able to evade. Kanyon has long and lanky legs, but they're not particularly powerful, so Kane could direct his assault at Kanyon's knees and shins. Once his mobility is lessened, Kanyon's arsenal of high-impact maneuvers becomes mostly ineffective. And since Kanyon is by no means a classic mat technician, "The Innovator Of Offense" wouldn't know how to further his attack.

Chris Kanyon: Would Kanyon fear Kane? Probably, but he would be anxious to engage him in combat. He would wait for Kane's hesitations and the moments he takes between one move and another. Kanyon's best moves are more than quick; they're sudden. If executed late in a match, either the Michinoku driver or the Kanyon cutter might hand the New Yorker a victory.

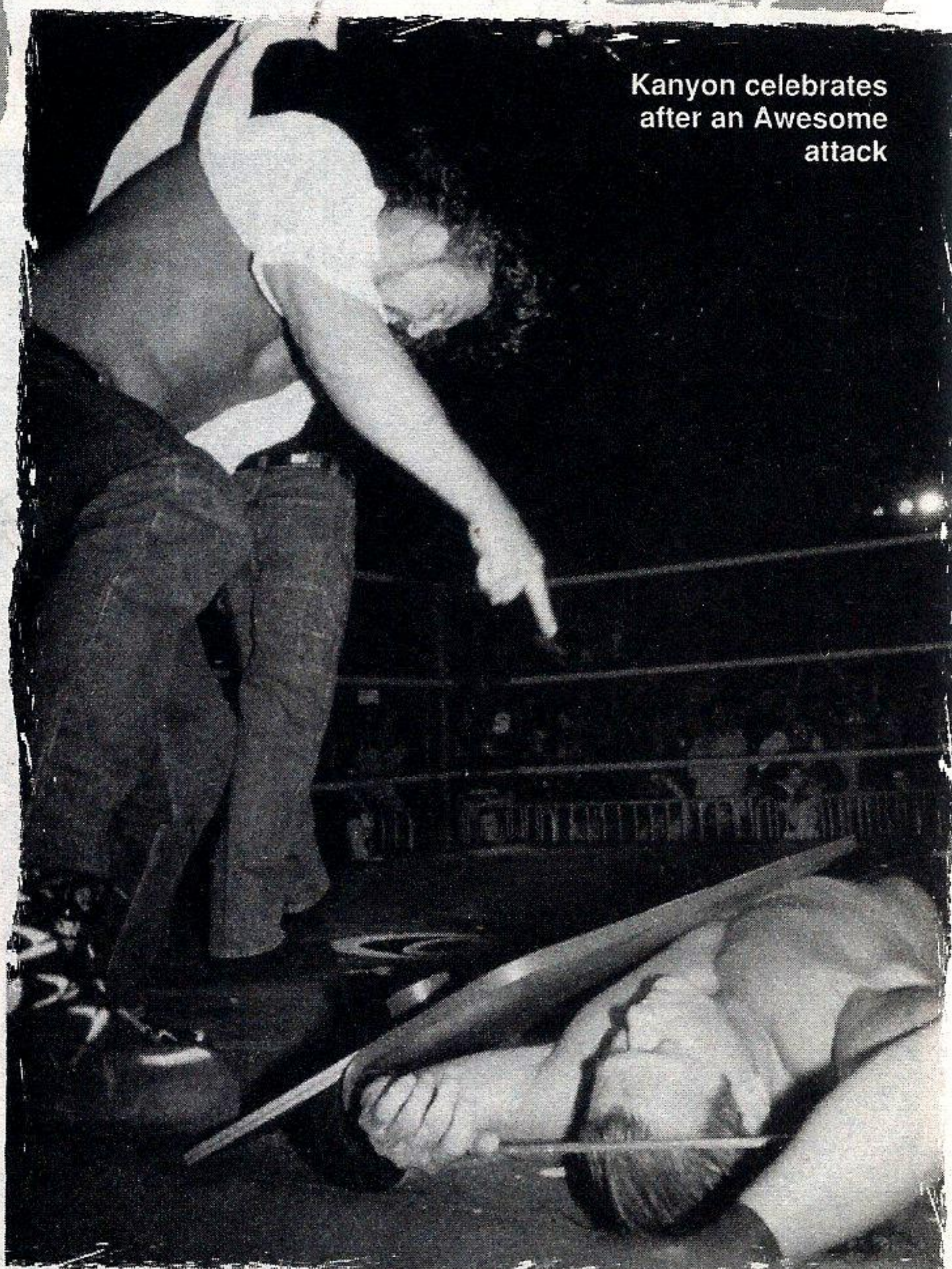
IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Kane: "I am a man of few words, because each word I say burns my throat. I do not like ... Kanyon's ... attitude. He reminds me of the mean children who laughed at my disfigurements as a child. He is too cocky for his own good. Who's better than Kanyon? Kane!"

Chris Kanyon: "And I thought DDP was a prime candidate for plastic surgery! Hey, Kane, I got an idea. Will you let me have that old voice thing of yours for Halloween? That would be great for trick-or-treating back in Queens! I could pretend to be Bela Lugosi or Boris Karloff, or somebody like that. Come to think of it, my throat is sore from imitating DDP all these months. Yeah, I could use somethin' for that!"

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Kane
Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Kane



Kanyon celebrates after an Awesome attack

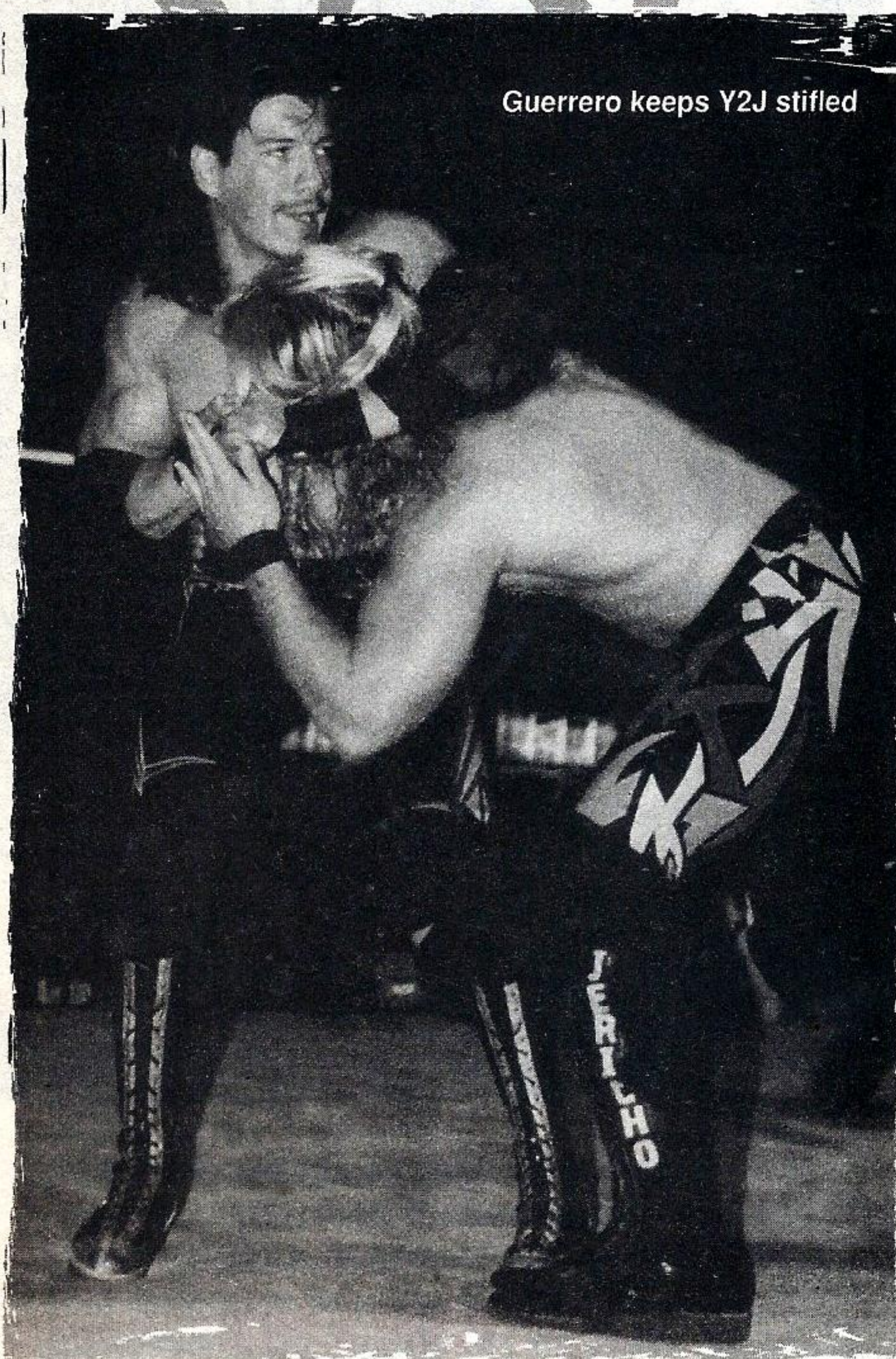
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Kane
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Chris Kanyon
Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Chris Kanyon

BOTTOM LINE

Chris Kanyon would do surprisingly well by catching Kane with a Michinoku driver and a Kanyon cutter at key moments. But Kane would rebound from each of those moves, leaving Kanyon unsure of what to do. Since he has never competed in the WWF, Kanyon wouldn't have the benefit of previously facing Kane, The Undertaker, or anyone else with such high thresholds of pain. Kane would humiliate "The Innovator" by defeating him with the Kanyon cutter.

Eddie GUERRERO VS

No. 10 vs. No. 10 NOBODY DOES IT BETTER



Guerrero keeps Y2J stifled

Are there "mean streets" in El Paso? If so, they probably don't compare to the mean streets of Staten Island, home of Big Vito. Eddie Guerrero was reared in a more stable environment, learning the sport at the knee of his father, Gory, and his brothers, Mando, Chavo, and Hector. Vito's definition of "family" was quite different, as he earned a few dollars "making deliveries" and roughing up merchants who didn't pay for protection. Would hardcore specialist Vito withstand Guerrero's technical mastery?

Eddie Guerrero: The European champion, as he swoons at Chyna's every move, doesn't display much of his sharp intellect during pre-match promos, but it's still evident inside the ring. When his high-flying style isn't enough, he resorts to sheer wiliness. Using a lead pipe hidden inside a bouquet of roses isn't fair, yet it's kept the European belt around his waist.

Big Vito: He has emerged as WCW's toughest streetfighter. That wasn't apparent during his World tag team title reigns with Johnny the Bull, but he made it painfully apparent to Johnny, Terry Funk, Ralphus, Norman Smiley, and David Flair in hardcore competition. Each one fell to the stick-swinging, chair-smashing thug from Staten Island. He might surpass Funk as the greatest WCW hardcore champion ever (not that that's saying much).

ACHILLES HEELS

Eddie Guerrero: Guerrero has endured a lot of injuries through the years. He suffered a punctured liver and a broken hip during a terrible car crash on New Year's Day 1999. He made an inauspicious WWF debut in February when he dislocated his elbow in his very first WWF match. If Guerrero is pounded long enough, his opponent is bound to find a nagging injury to capitalize upon.

Big Vito: He's become obsessed with hardcore. Vito pursues a hardcore lifestyle 24 hours a day, causing trouble wherever he goes. Sooner or later, Vito's enemies will unite against him, take his hardcore title, and probably put him in the hospital. The fact that he owns the hardcore title is enough to bring challengers to the fore. It isn't necessary for Vito to antagonize people into challenging him.

GAME PLAN

Eddie Guerrero: He would keep the action inside the ring as much as possible, aware Vito

S. Big VITO

would have the advantage on the arena floor. Assuming Vito has done some heavy punching in defense of his hardcore title, Guerrero would stomp Vito's battered knuckles until he was no longer able to clench his fists. That would capitalize on a weakness and rob Vito of his greatest weapon at the same time.

Big Vito: The WCW hardcore champion, knowing he has superior punching power, would try to lure Guerrero into a slugfest. He would aim for the head, rocking Eddie's skull with straight punches, uppercuts, and headbutts. That would leave Guerrero too disoriented to execute his more complex moves, while leaving him vulnerable to a two-fisted attack. If he could get away with it, Vito would use a DDT onto a steel chair as his finisher.

IF IT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD SAY IT

Eddie Guerrero: "I don't understand guys like Vito. What's his name? Vito the Fish? Vito the Lobster? Vito the Burrito? Oh, *Big Vito*. That's even less original than I thought. I don't know what you're thinkin', man, but this ain't no way to get a *mamacita*. You're wound too tight and goin' loco! C'mon, Vito, lighten' up. Let 'Latino Heat' show you how!"

Big Vito: "There were a few grubs like Eddie Guerrero on my home turf of Staten Island, New York. You know what? They didn't last too long, because me and my boys would introduce them to the Staten Island Ferry, if you know what I sayin'.

I'm talkin' about underneath the ferry. This guy lets a girl push him around! That broad ought to be home makin' spaghetti or a stromboli, not getting involved in her man's business."

OUR PICKS

Stu Saks (Publisher): Eddie Guerrero

Dave Lenker (Editor-in-Chief): Big Vito

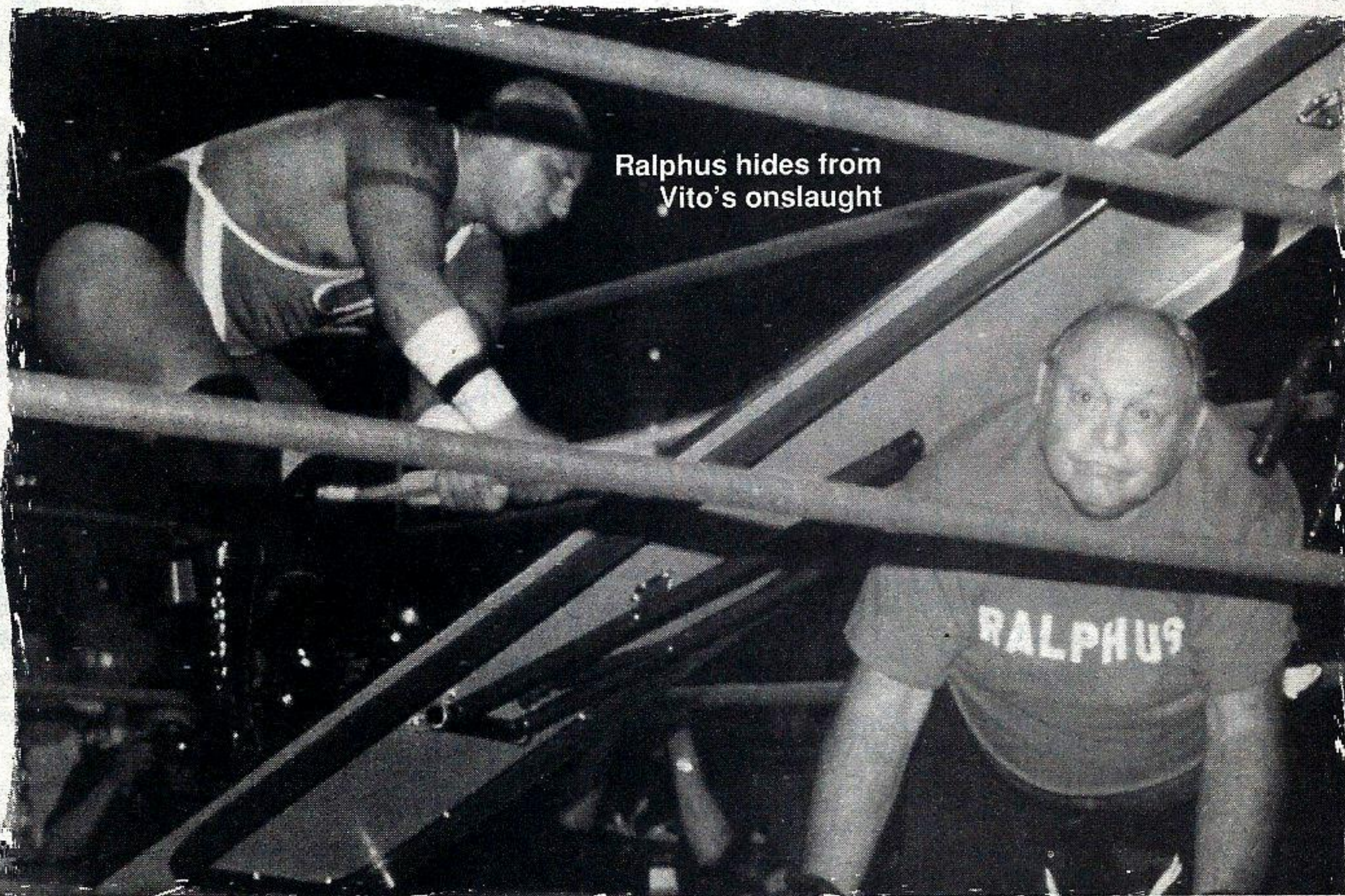
Brandi Mankiewicz (Managing Editor): Big Vito

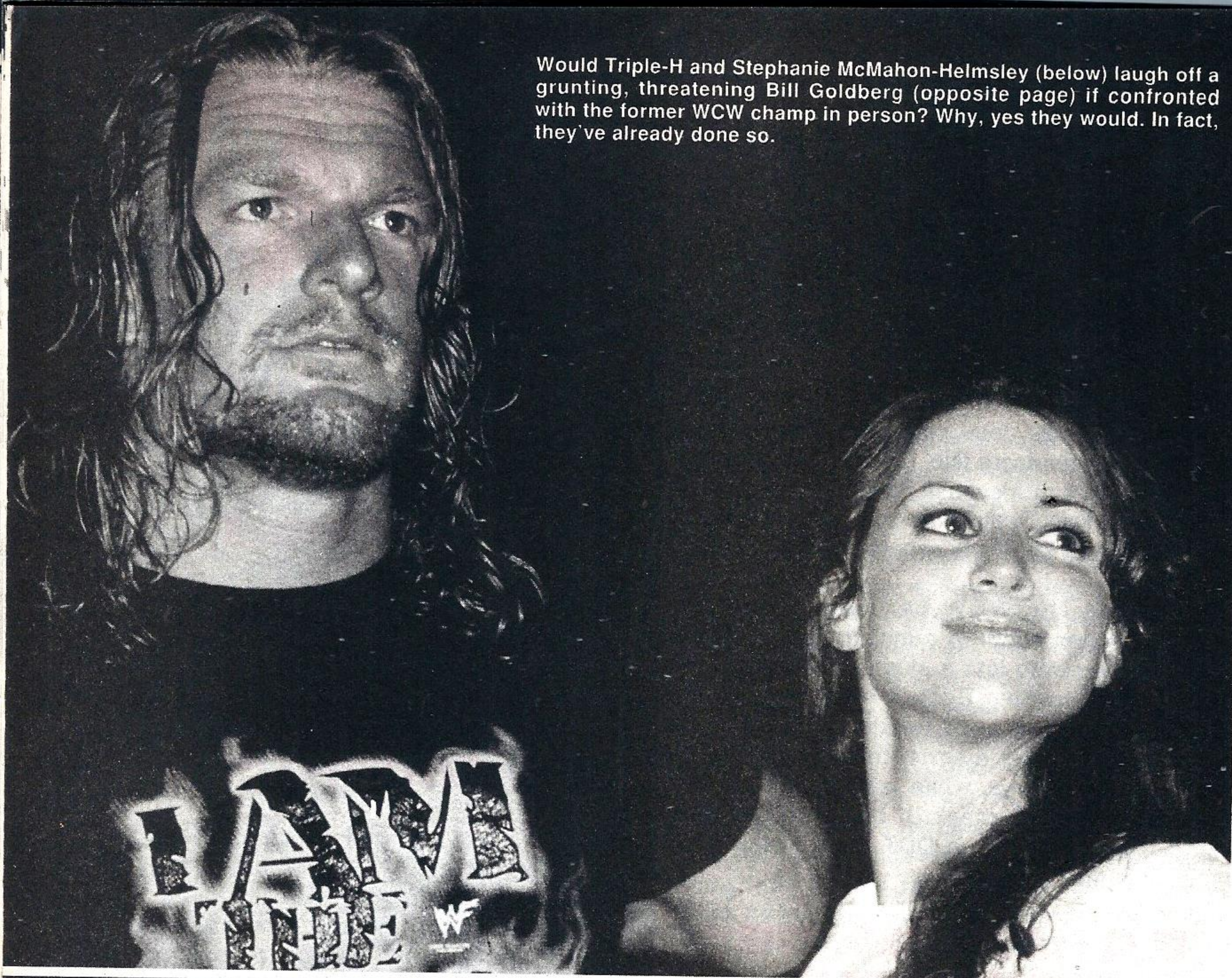
Will Welsh (Associate Editor): Eddie Guerrero

Harry Burkett (Senior Writer): Eddie Guerrero

BOTTOM LINE

Big Vito has emerged as one of the most ruthless competitors in WCW, but for all that brutality, he still lacks the scientific skills to be a true superstar. Eddie Guerrero, however, always had the skills; it just took him a while to hone an aggressive edge. Since Guerrero has both assets going for him, we predict a frog splash would flatten tough-talking Vito, even if he is from Staten Island.





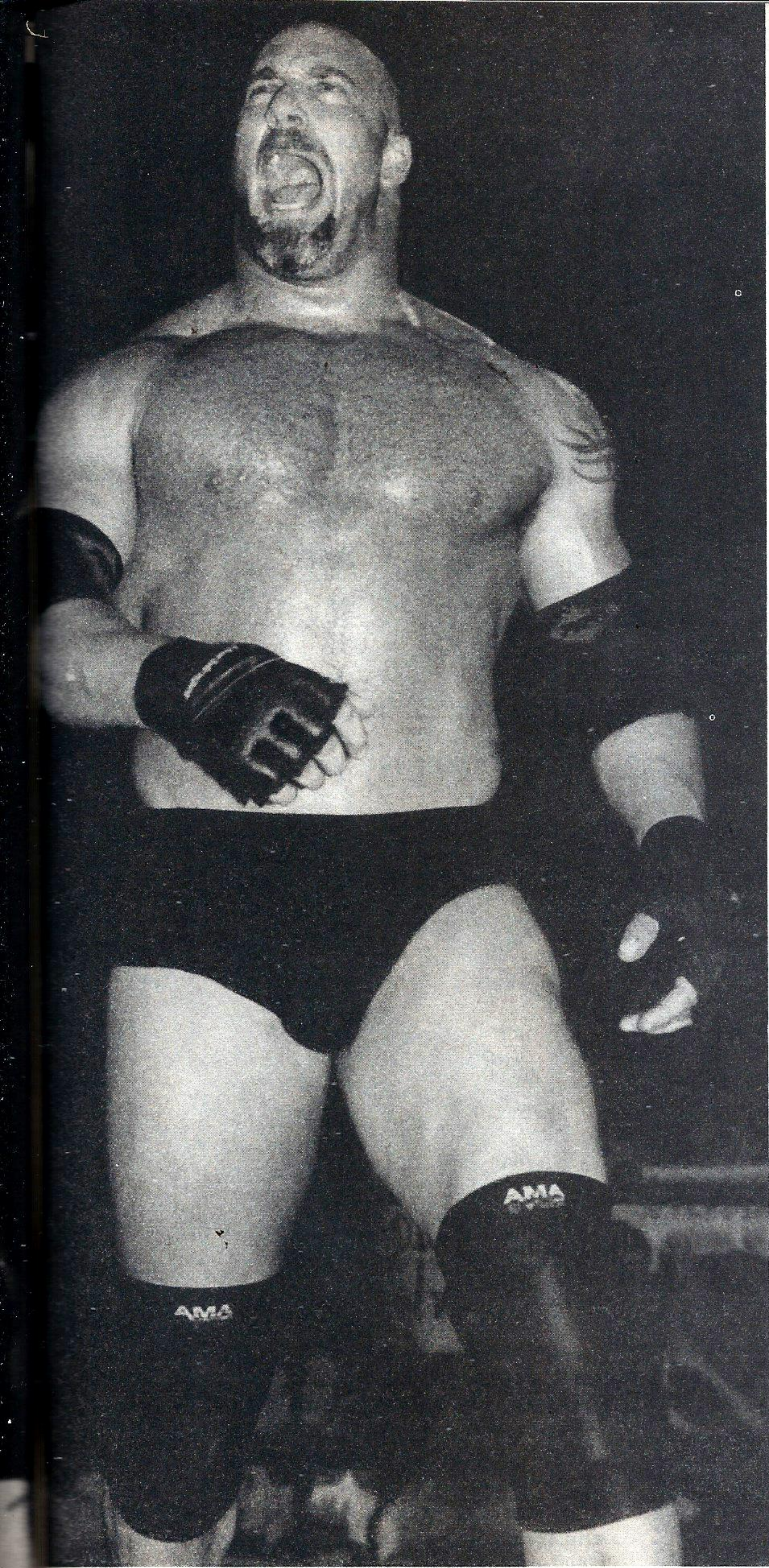
Would Triple-H and Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley (below) laugh off a grunting, threatening Bill Goldberg (opposite page) if confronted with the former WCW champ in person? Why, yes they would. In fact, they've already done so.

TRIPLE-H VS. GOLDBERG

Their War Of Words
Almost Turns Violent!

Triple-H and Goldberg are a federation apart, but for one day earlier this year, they were separated by just 30 feet. They almost came to blows then. Next time, it could be war

Photos by Frank Vitucci & Duane Long

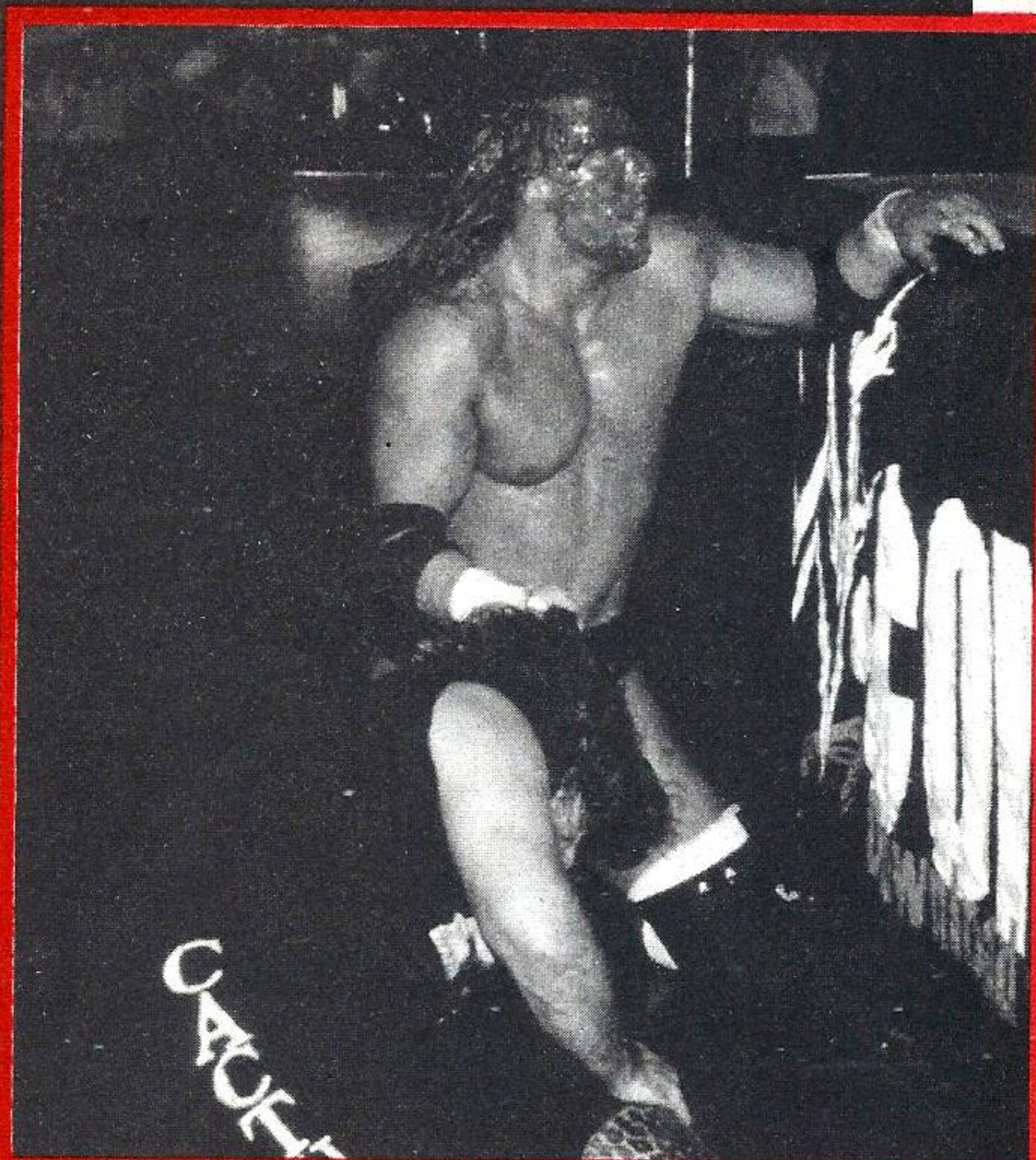


By Dave Rosenbaum

THEY'RE SEPARATED ... for now. One is in the WWF, the other is in WCW, and the gulf between the two couldn't be wider. The chances of WCW's Bill Goldberg wrestling the WWF's Triple-H any time in the very near future are about the same as the chances of the Super Bowl champion St. Louis Rams playing the NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers in some kind of combined football-basketball game.

But recently, only a few tables and about 30 feet separated "Da Man" from "The Game." In mid-June, Goldberg and Triple-H, on behalf of their respective federations, were attending a product licensing convention in New York City. The event was low-key—men and women in business suits trying to do business with various companies—until Goldberg nearly turned the staid event into Slamboree.

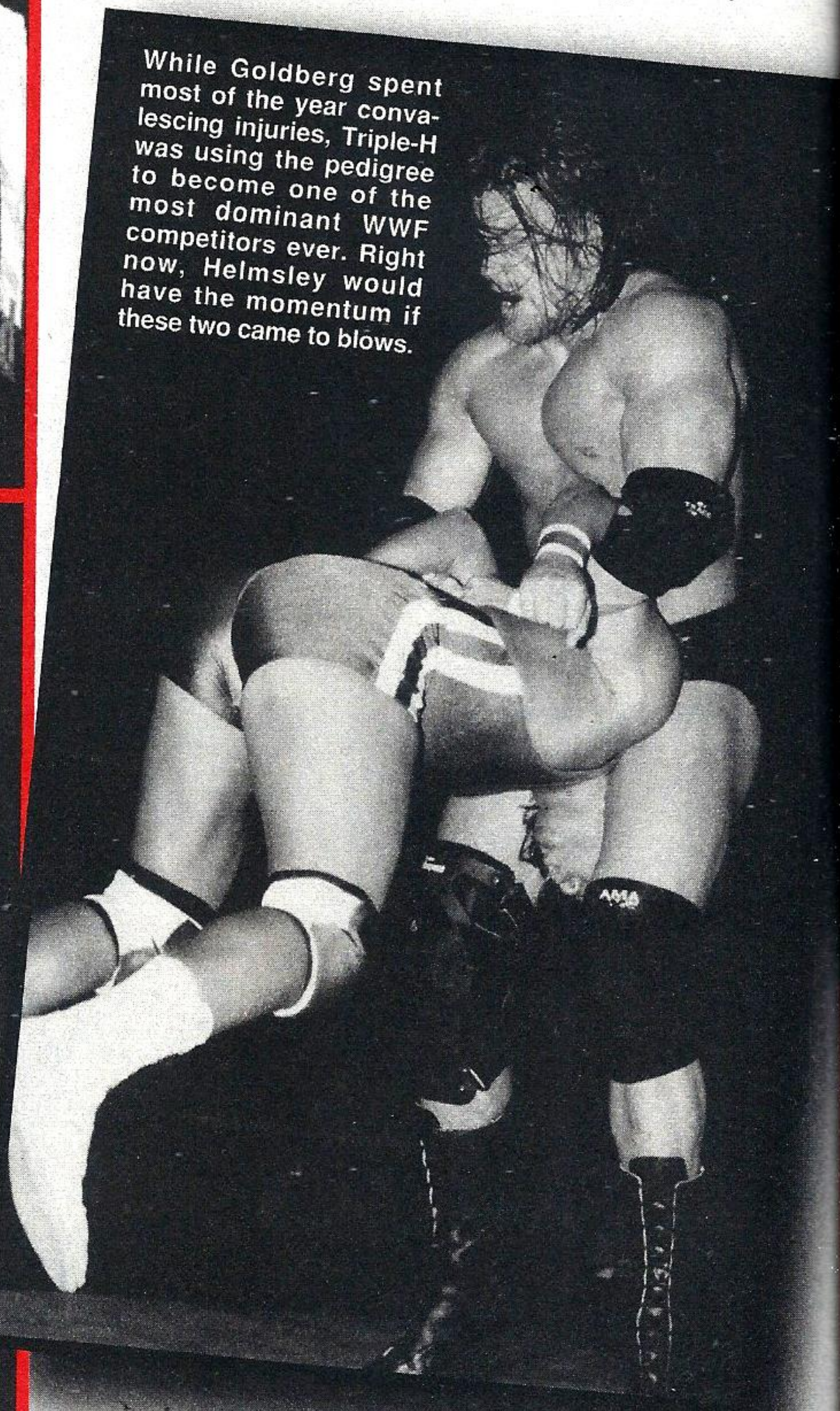
"I was with Stephanie signing autographs," Triple-H recalled on the WWF's Internet show, *Byte This!* "We're sitting there signing, and WCW also had a booth on the other side. At some point in time, Bill Goldberg decided to come over and just basically stand 30 feet away, with a few of the WCW people around him, and basically just hurl obscenities at me, and, you know, say he was gonna kick my ass or whatever, and just use a lot of 'F' words, and to me, embarrassed himself and embarrassed World Championship Wrestling. As if they can't embarrass themselves anymore.



It would take more than a little blood to stop a Goldberg-Helsley feud once it started. Triple-H didn't let the loss of a few pints keep him from destroying Cactus Jack (top), and a crimson Sid Vicious did not scare Goldberg away (above).

"If Bill Goldberg has problems with me, that's fine. I mean, I don't know why or what his problem was supposed to be. I've heard anything from it was Russo's idea to try to get some [publicity] for their company by calling me out in a public way, like [Goldberg] tried to do a few years ago by calling Austin out on *Jay Leno*. I don't know what the reasoning was, but if it was that Bill Goldberg had a problem with me, Bill Goldberg should have addressed me personally, not in front of a bunch of people and not throwing profanity.

While Goldberg spent most of the year convalescing injuries, Triple-H was using the pedigree to become one of the most dominant WWF competitors ever. Right now, Helmsley would have the momentum if these two came to blows.



"I quite honestly kind of laughed at him and just looked like, *Oh, okay. Real smart.* He just kinda went off on his own and really kind of embarrassed himself. The people that were around us were like, 'Who was that jerk?'"

The fact was that Goldberg *did* have a problem with Triple-H, and Triple-H should have known it. Early this year, Triple-H appeared on a radio show and made several disparaging remarks about Goldberg's experience, injuries, and potential value to

the WWF. Triple-H criticized WCW and claimed Goldberg was a prima donna flash in the pan who gets injured and sits out whenever things don't go his way. Goldberg was enraged when the comments were relayed to him.

"I think that's, pardon me, the biggest crock of [crap] I've ever heard, because I think I'm going to be instrumental in turning the company around," Goldberg said in an interview on scoopswrestling.com. "Why the hell would I stay out? I think that's ridiculous. It pains me to even hear that. But you know what? That probably came from Triple-H, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, who I think is a piece of [crap]. And I'll throw a challenge out to him to meet me in my backyard, and I'll give him the damn address. I'll even send a car for him."

In reality, Triple-H started this back-and-forth with his comments about Goldberg. Perhaps Goldberg's actions at the licensing convention were a publicity stunt, but he had reason to be angry. Perhaps he chose the wrong time and place to confront Triple-H. And, just maybe, the right time and place is only a few years down the road.

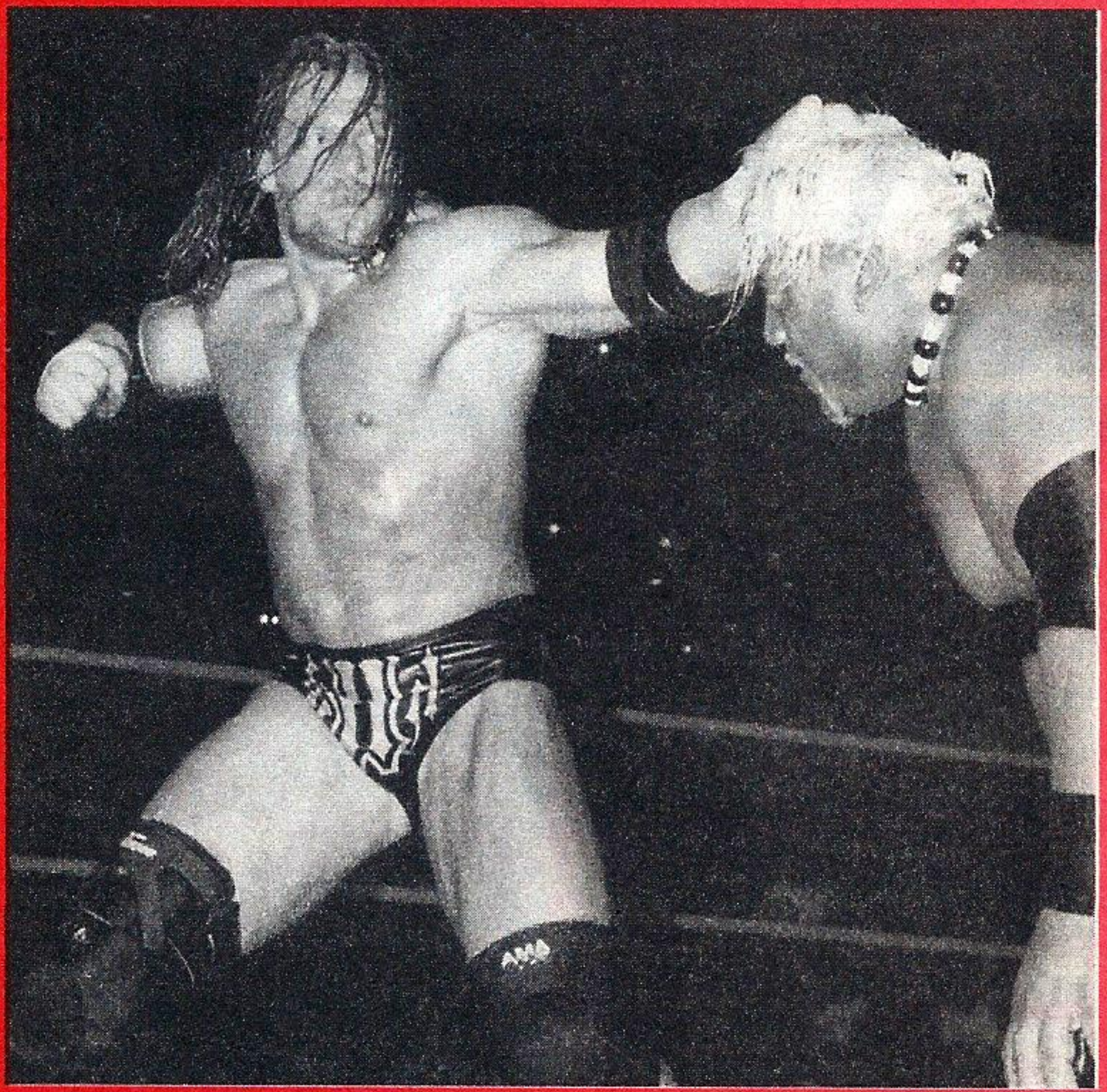
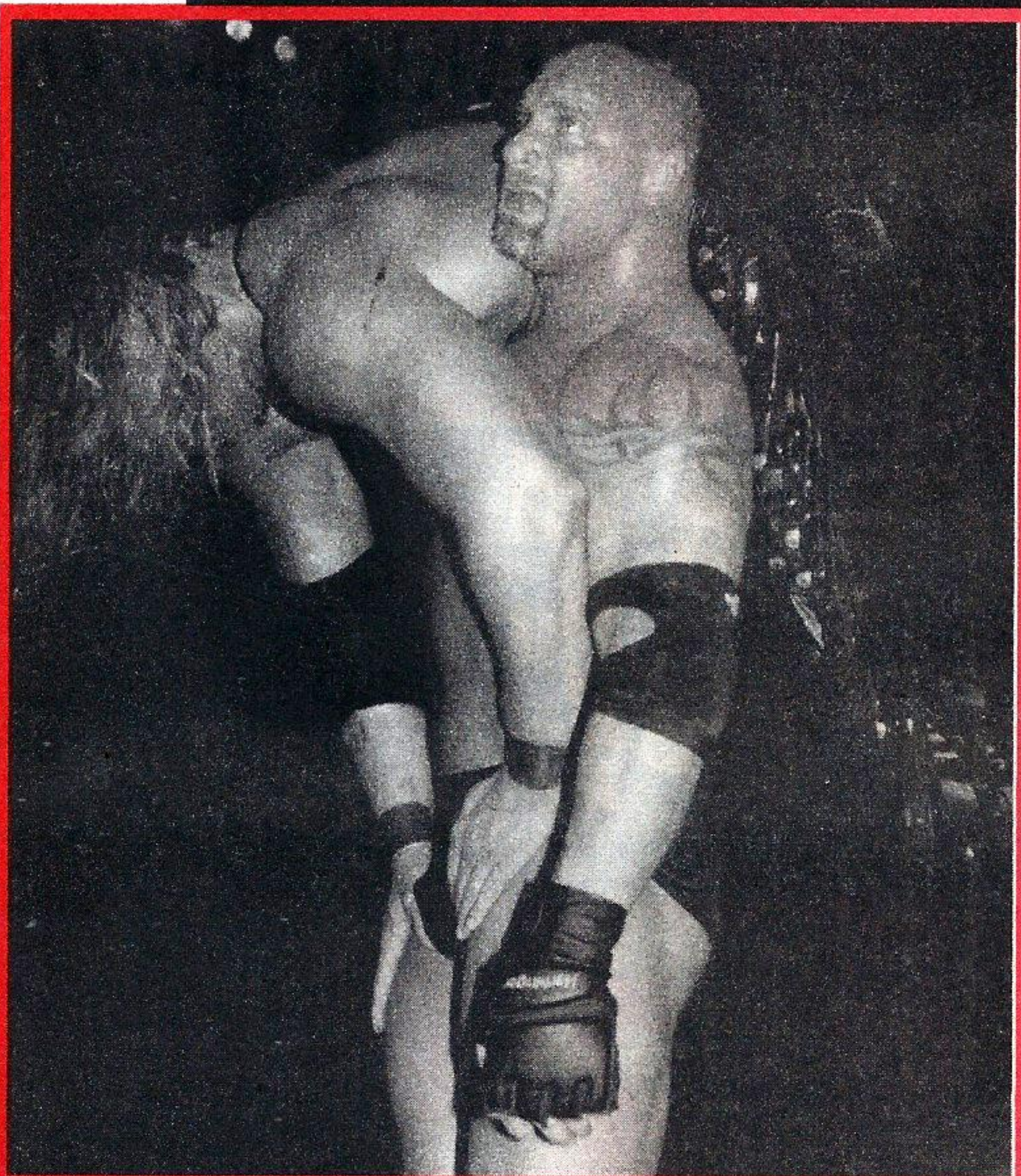
Goldberg recently told the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* that he would consider jumping to the WWF in three years, after his WCW contract expires. Considering Triple-H's level of success, there's no reason to believe he won't be there if and when Goldberg arrives. Considering that only elephants have longer memories than angry wrestlers, there's no reason to believe Goldberg's first target won't be Triple-H.

Undoubtedly, Triple-H vs. Goldberg—right now, this year—would be a pay-per-view blockbuster. The battle between two of the top stars in the top two federations would be an instant Match of the Year candidate. But don't hold your breath: It's not going to happen. The WWF is on top of the world and has no reason to help WCW do business. Back in the 1980s, wrestling fans begged for a match between WWF World champion Hulk Hogan and NWA World champion Ric Flair. It didn't happen until Flair later signed with the WWF, and again when Hogan signed with WCW.

That's what we're waiting for. Three years from now, Goldberg will have to decide whether he wants to re-sign with WCW or jump to the WWF. He'll consider money, contract terms, and where he most wants to wrestle.

He'll probably also consider this: Triple-H is waiting for him. □

Would either Goldberg or Triple-H have an innate advantage against the other? It's hard to say, because they are both strong. Goldberg has tossed around Kevin Nash (below), and Rikishi has been no problem for Triple-H (bottom).



FOR

DAFFNEY,

LIFE'S A

SCREAM!

**SHE'S A STAR
WITH OR
WITHOUT THE
CRAZY ACT**



Sure, the
psycho gimmick
got her into
WCW, but
there's a
reason

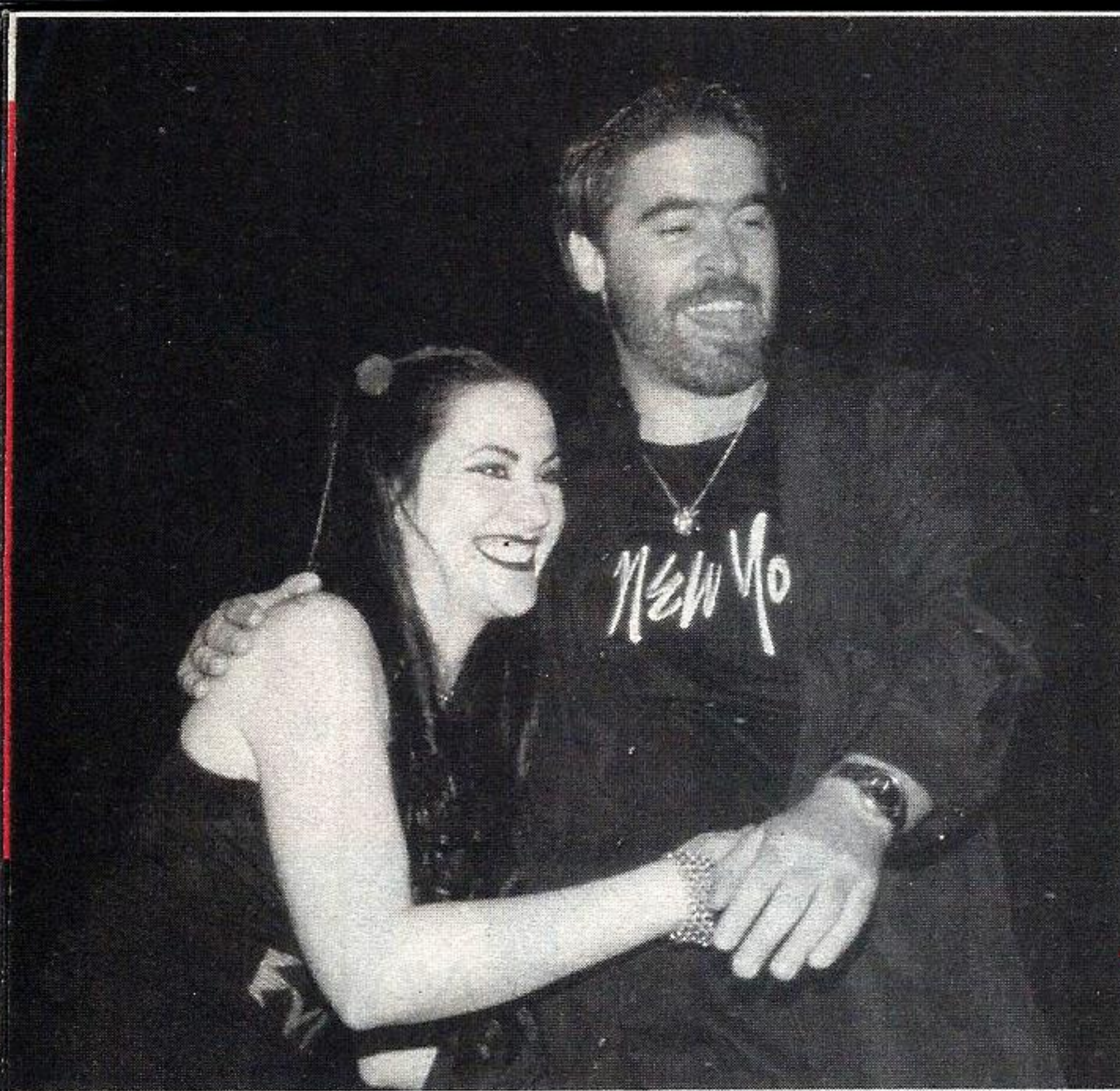
Daffney's
become one of
the most
popular females
in the sport

By Frank Krewda

WHETHER YOU cheer him or boo him, the ferocity of Bill Goldberg's spear and jackhammer will always inspire awe. Likewise, Scott Steiner's physique will continue to boggle the mind, regardless of the tactics he uses in the ring.

Yet for all the success these behemoths have enjoyed over the past two years, it seems neither Goldberg nor Steiner has been able to do what one unlikely WCW performer continues to do despite the fact that she can't claim even a fraction of their qualifications for the sport.

Maybe Goldberg and Steiner (and several other WCW stars) should spend some time training with Daffney. No, she's not going to take Steiner to the weight room and show him her latest workout technique. Nor will she take Goldberg out to a



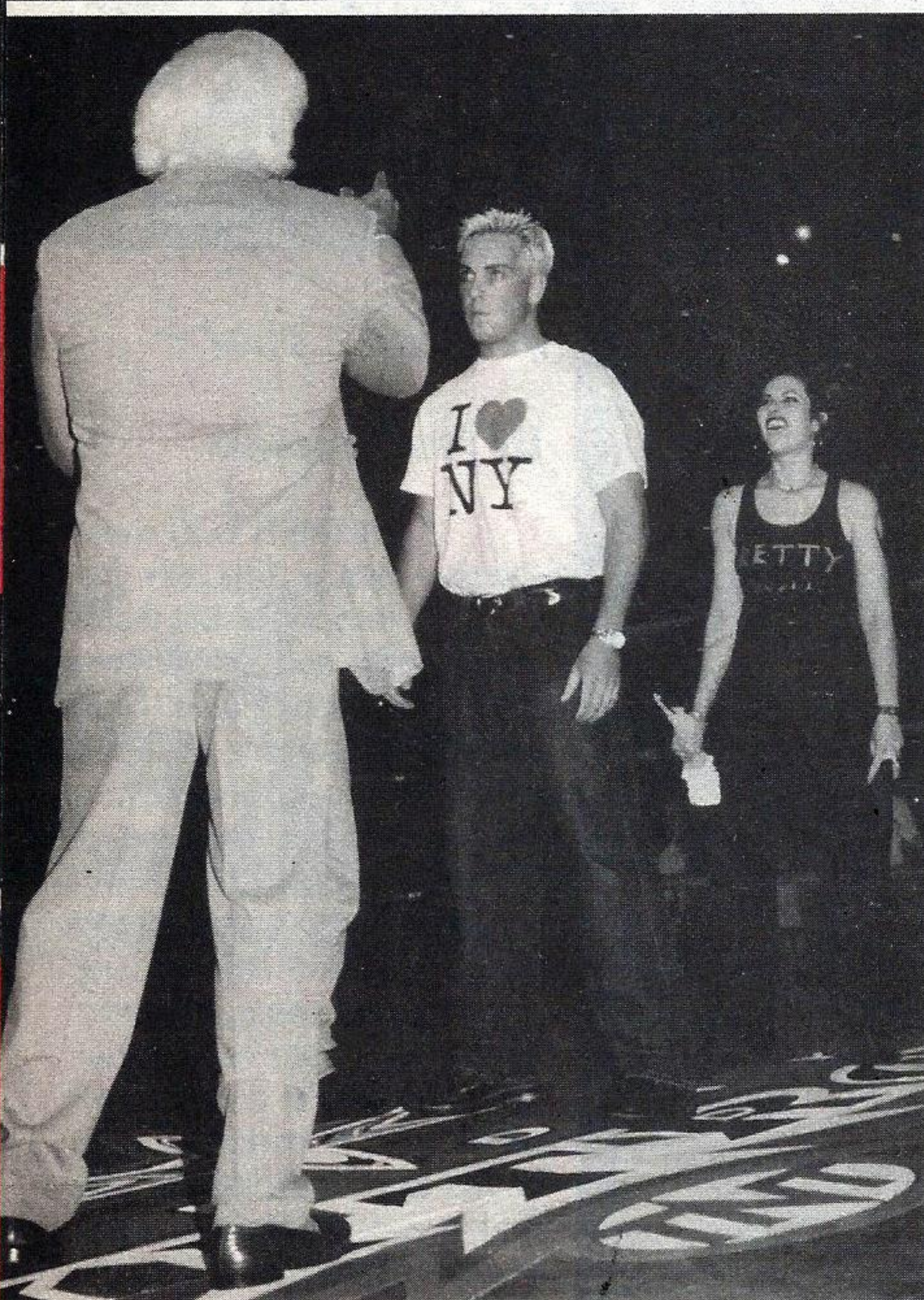
because few WCW performers appear to enjoy themselves as much as she does.

"Listen, I'm having the time of my life out there," Daffney said. "I get paid to go out on national TV and jump around and scream like a lunatic. Who wouldn't love to be in my position?"

Oh, we're pretty sure that there are more than a few females currently in wrestling who don't exactly relish their roles in life.

Look at the beautiful Kimberly. The wife of "Diamond" Dallas Page, Kimberly was slowly emerging as one of WCW's top stars. As the armpiece of Eric Bischoff, she was given creative license to deride the ringside fans with whatever nasty, rude thought happened to pass through her cute little head. It was a position that most

Daffney and Vince Russo were all smiles earlier this year (above left). Together, they helped woo David Flair away from his father, Ric. Every time Ric tried to talk some sense into his son, Daffney stood behind David and made faces at the "Nature Boy" (below left).



females in the industry would have died to get. But instead of coming to work every day with a smile on her face and a new insult ready to be hurled, Kimberly quit the company after claiming creative differences with the heads of WCW. Simply put, she quit because she was no longer having fun.

Not Daffney. And when you consider her modest spot in the WCW lineup (sidekick of Crowbar), her attitude becomes that much more impressive.

If anyone had bleak prospects for a glorious career in WCW, it was this raven-haired screamer. Consider how she gained entree into the federation: as an obsessed fan of David Flair. At the time, Flair was not exactly popular—let's be honest, the kid was loathed—and Daffney's contribution to the show was nothing more than kissing a picture of David while watching *Nitro*.

That all changed when she attacked Flair (with kisses) at a live event. The crowd's reaction told WCW writers all they needed to know about the wacko with the strong vocal cords.

"The fans really went for her," David recalled, "and all she did was kiss me."

Eventually, Daffney showed up in David's corner. At first, she just screamed and talked trash to his opponents, but soon she was actively interfering in his matches. Her behavior infuriated the wrestlers, but the fans (except for those at ringside whose hearing just took an absolute beating) loved

field and show him the proper way to execute the spear on some rusty old tackling dummies. But what she might be able to do is rekindle some of the pure love that both of these men once had for the sport they now dominate.

She'll show them what it's like to have fun again.

Admit it—and don't let the fact that those hellacious screams send you scrambling for the cotton balls—you like Daffney. It's hard not to, simply

When Daffney first came on the scene in WCW, everyone took her to be nothing more than a deranged fan. Then Daffney showed her wicked side by beating up people like Vampiro, smiling, screaming, and enjoying herself in the process.

every ear-shattering moment.

Normally, a low blow delivered on Ric Flair or Arn Anderson would be enough to incite a riot, yet Daffney seemed incapable of getting on the wrong side of the fans. How could you not laugh when as Vince Russo and David Flair ripped Ric Flair during a tour of the "Nature Boy's" mansion, she enthusiastically jumped up and down on all of the beds?

"It was the damndest thing," said Anderson. "Not only was this girl dangerous, but she could turn a crowd against you. We had a real problem there for a while."

The problem got worse when Daffney upgraded her interference from low blows to huracanranas, but her willingness to try new and dangerous maneuvers solidified her popularity with the fans—and with Flair and Crowbar, with whom she occasionally teamed.

"Daffney really worked hard to improve herself," said Crowbar. "She's training at the Power Plant, and you can see the improvement. I think the fans see it, too. She has a lot more confidence in the ring."

She also had enough confidence outside the ring to show a different side of her personality after David ruined their recent wedding engagement. Once Daffney

discovered that David was having an affair with Miss Hancock, the manic sycophant suddenly gave way to vulnerable woman, and the long black mane was replaced by neon-colored wigs. Tampering with the character was risky, but Daffney's willingness to experiment made the transition a smooth one—and the fans cheered her as enthusiastically as ever.

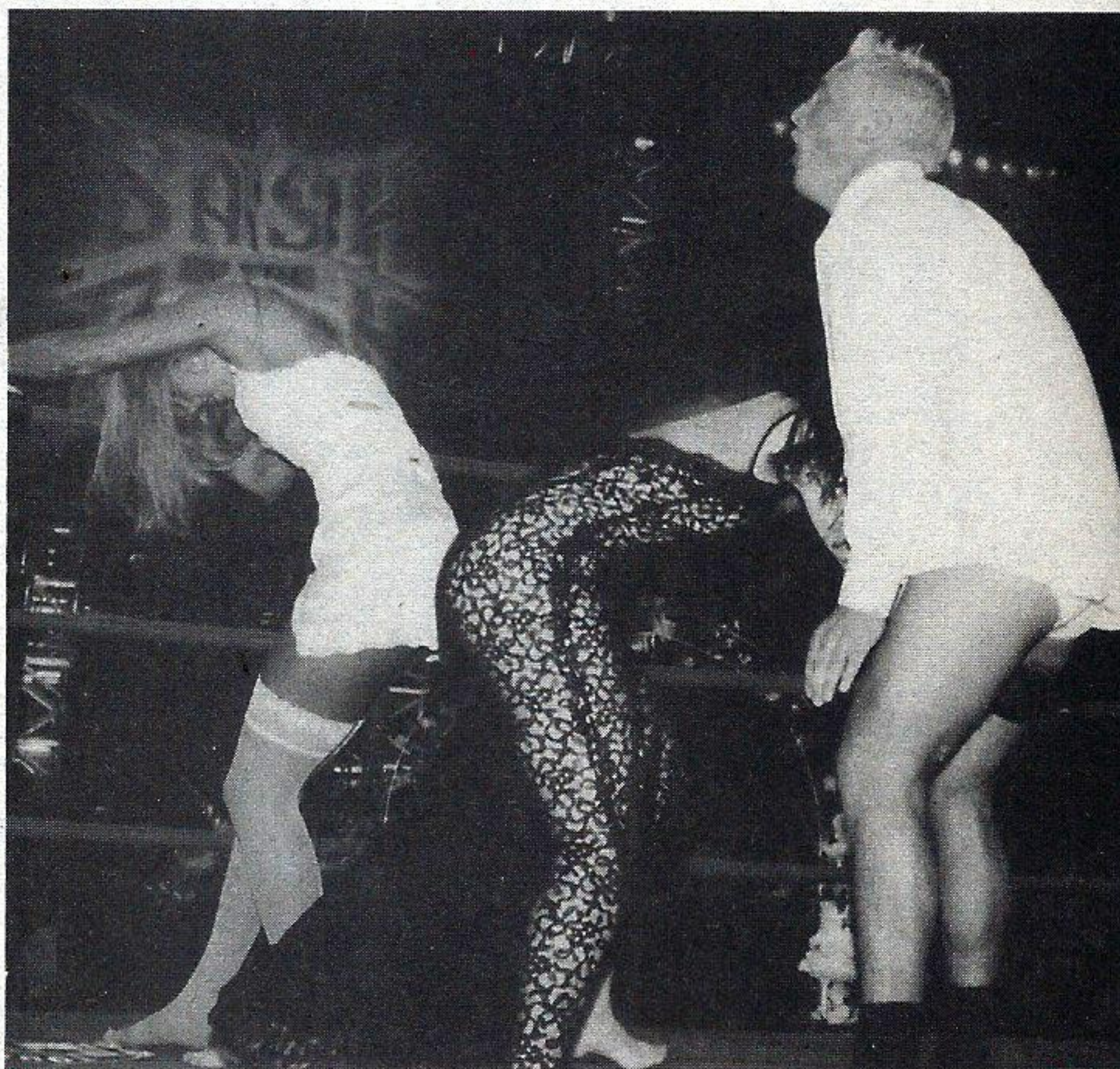
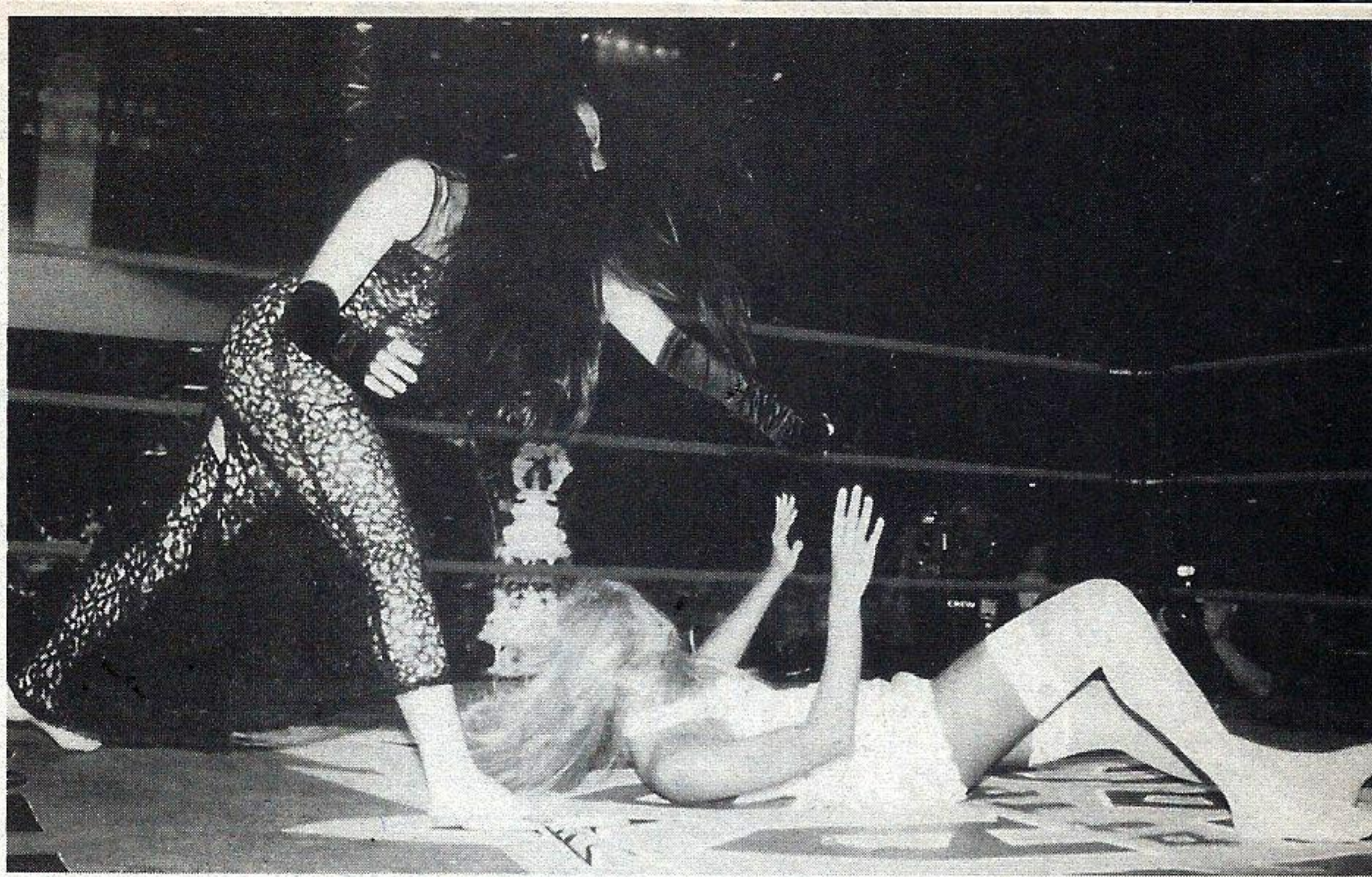
WCW fan Michelle Burke says Daffney's popularity can be at-

tributed to one thing.

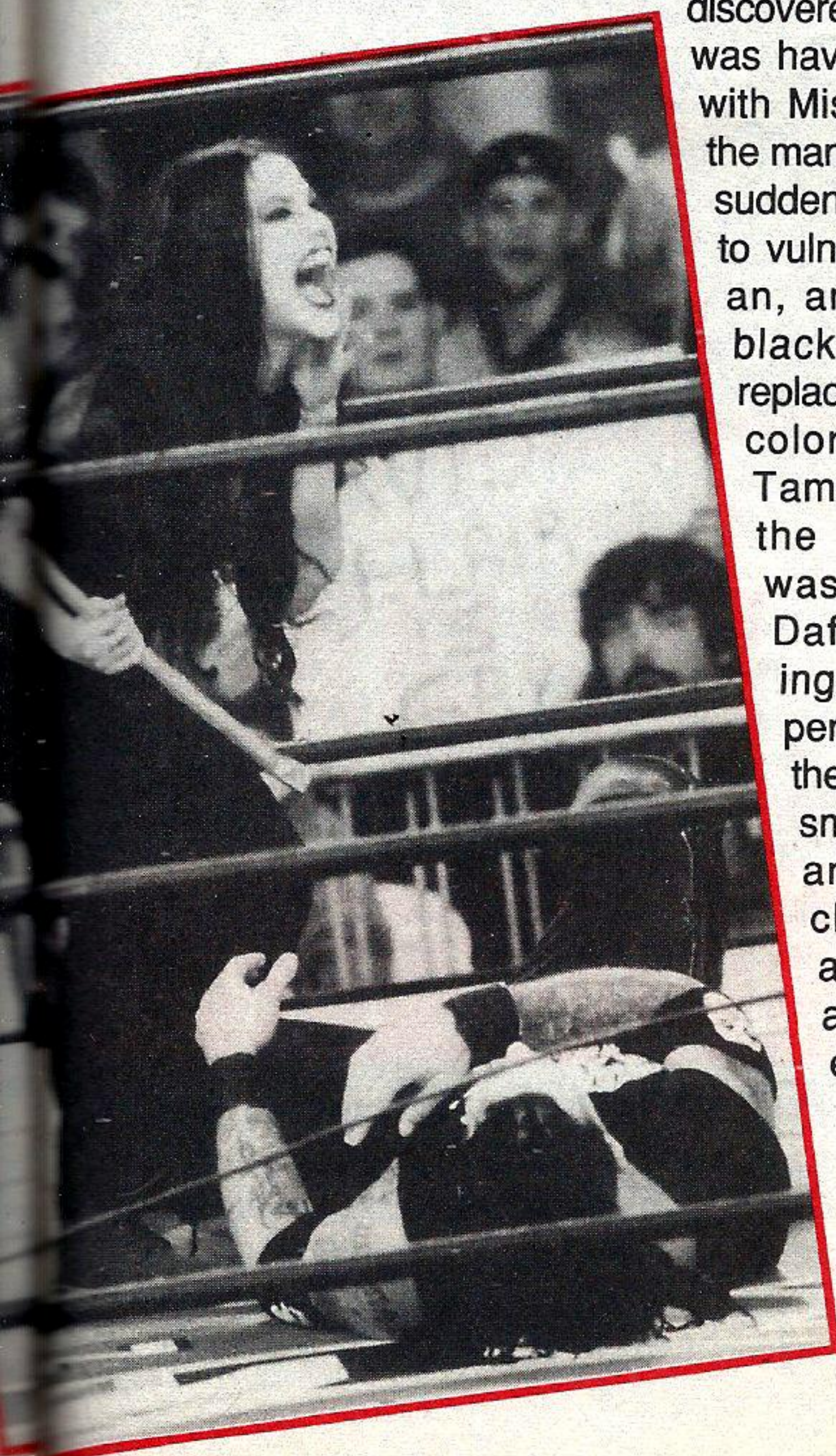
"Well, the thing about Daffney is that she's not a sex kitten like Kimberly or a glam queen like Miss Hancock. She's like the girl next door, if you live next to the Addams family. But seriously, she's a normal girl. She wears jeans and T-shirts, not leather and lace. It seems like she's just being herself. You have to appreciate that as a wrestling fan."

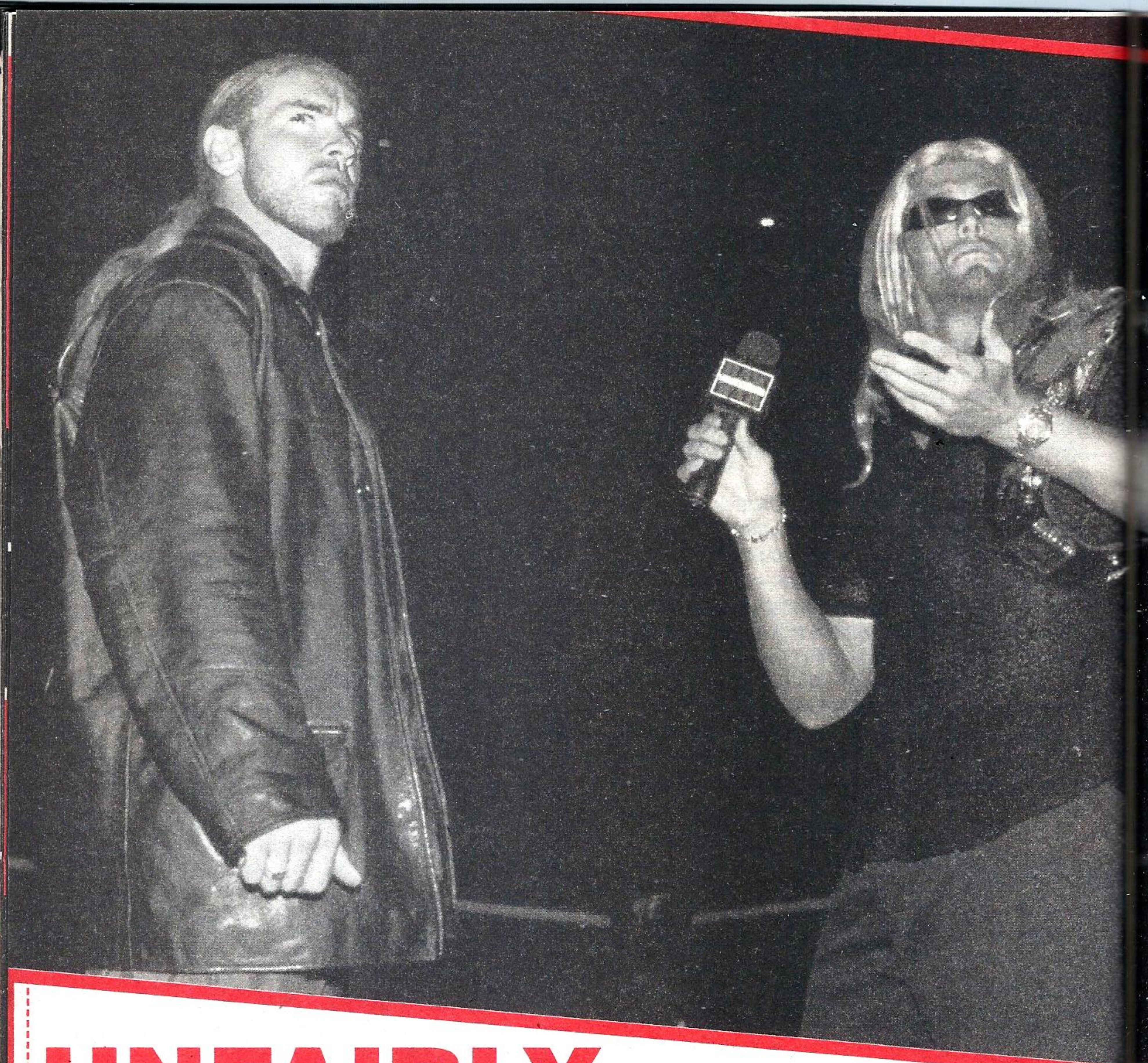
So while WCW's established set continues to bellyache—both publicly and privately—about their role with the company, Daffney forges on in apparent bliss. She's reached a place that has managed to elude even the federation's most skilled and able wrestlers.

Somehow, Daffney manages to have fun no matter what she does. □



When Daffney realized that David Flair was two-timing her with the leggy Miss Hancock, she vowed revenge. First, she whipped around Hancock at Bash at the Beach (top), then she battered the Flair family jewels (above).





UNFAIRLY LABELLED!

CAN CHRISTIAN & EDGE LIVE

By Frank Krewda

WRESTLING HASN'T BEEN kind to pretty boys. Whether historians are willing to admit it or not, the athletic achievements of superstars such as Gorgeous George, Ric Flair, and Buddy Rogers will always be stigmatized by their annoying self-absorption.

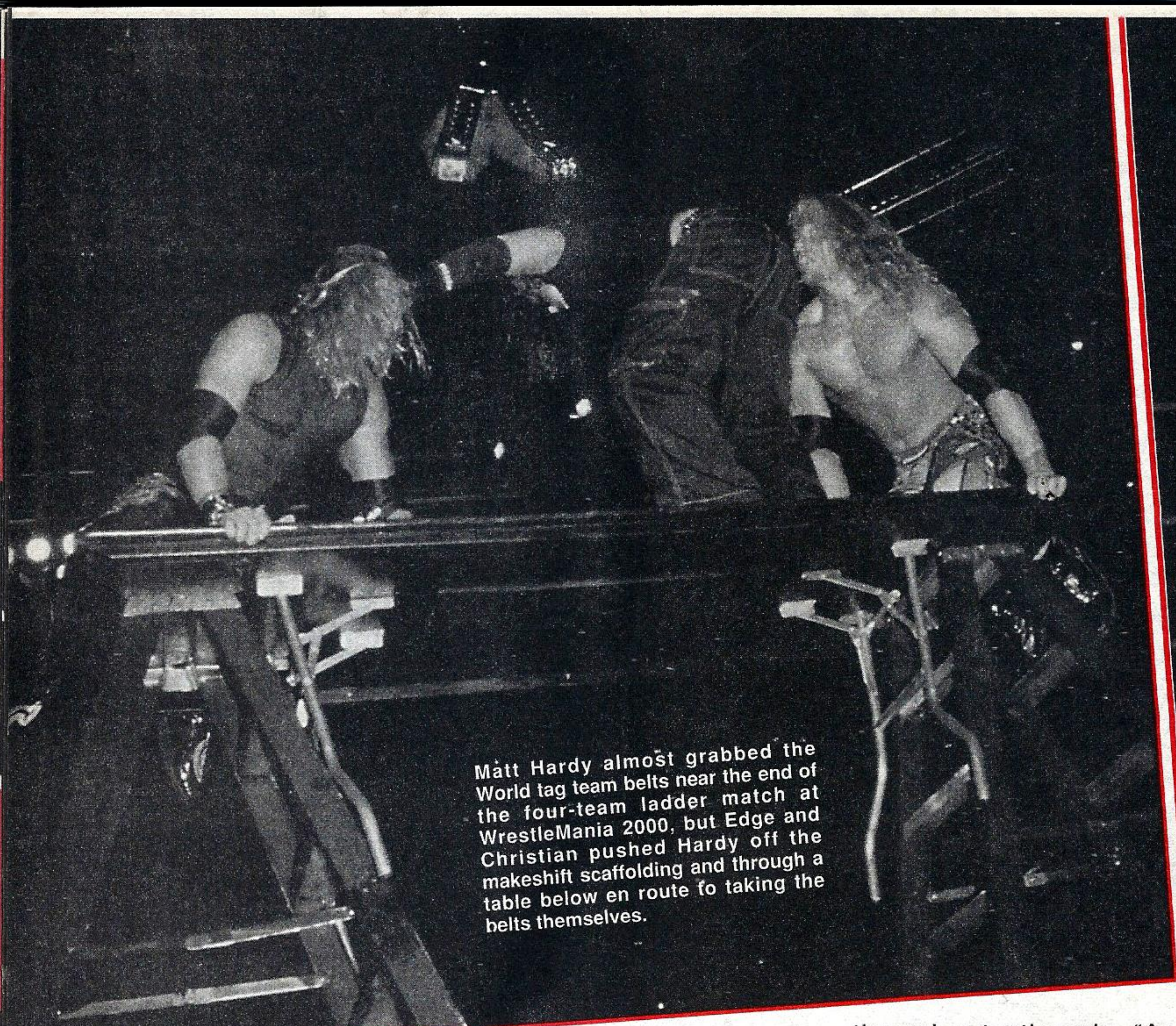


Although Edge and Christian have made light of Kane in the ring (above) and poked fun at their fans while providing color commentary (below), their run as World tag team champions has been far from a joke. They're a solid unit.



DOWN THEIR "PRETTY BOY" IMAGE?

There is little doubt WWF fans will remember Christian and Edge for years to come. But it might be for all the wrong reasons



Matt Hardy almost grabbed the World tag team belts near the end of the four-team ladder match at WrestleMania 2000, but Edge and Christian pushed Hardy off the makeshift scaffolding and through a table below en route to taking the belts themselves.

Yet, every few years, professional wrestling produces at least one dolled up narcissist who thinks looking good is just as important as wrestling well. Well, this generation has produced two of them, and they're two-time WWF World tag team champions Christian and Edge.

Why, wrestling experts ask, are these fine young wrestlers so committed to teeing off the fans? Why have they abandoned their intense approach for such a laid-back attitude? Why have two Canadians started talking like two Valley girls?

"I think Edge and Christian reflect the state of today's game," commented Jim Ross, the WWF's senior vice president of talent relations, who was instrumental in signing the duo more than two

years ago. "As we've all seen, it takes more than just pure talent to make it big in this business today. You gotta have style. You gotta be able to talk. And you gotta be able to reach the fans."

In the crowded WWF tag team scene, reaching the fans can take some extra effort—especially when so many teams have already connected with them.

Just glance at the roster and it will become apparent why Edge and Christian need to find their niche. Fans can't get enough of Too Cool's hip-hop antics or The Hardy Boyz' daredevil exploits. They cheer the underhanded tactics of The Dudley Boyz and applaud The Acolytes for their overt brutality.

But where do Edge and Christian fit in?

"As teen idols," Edge said

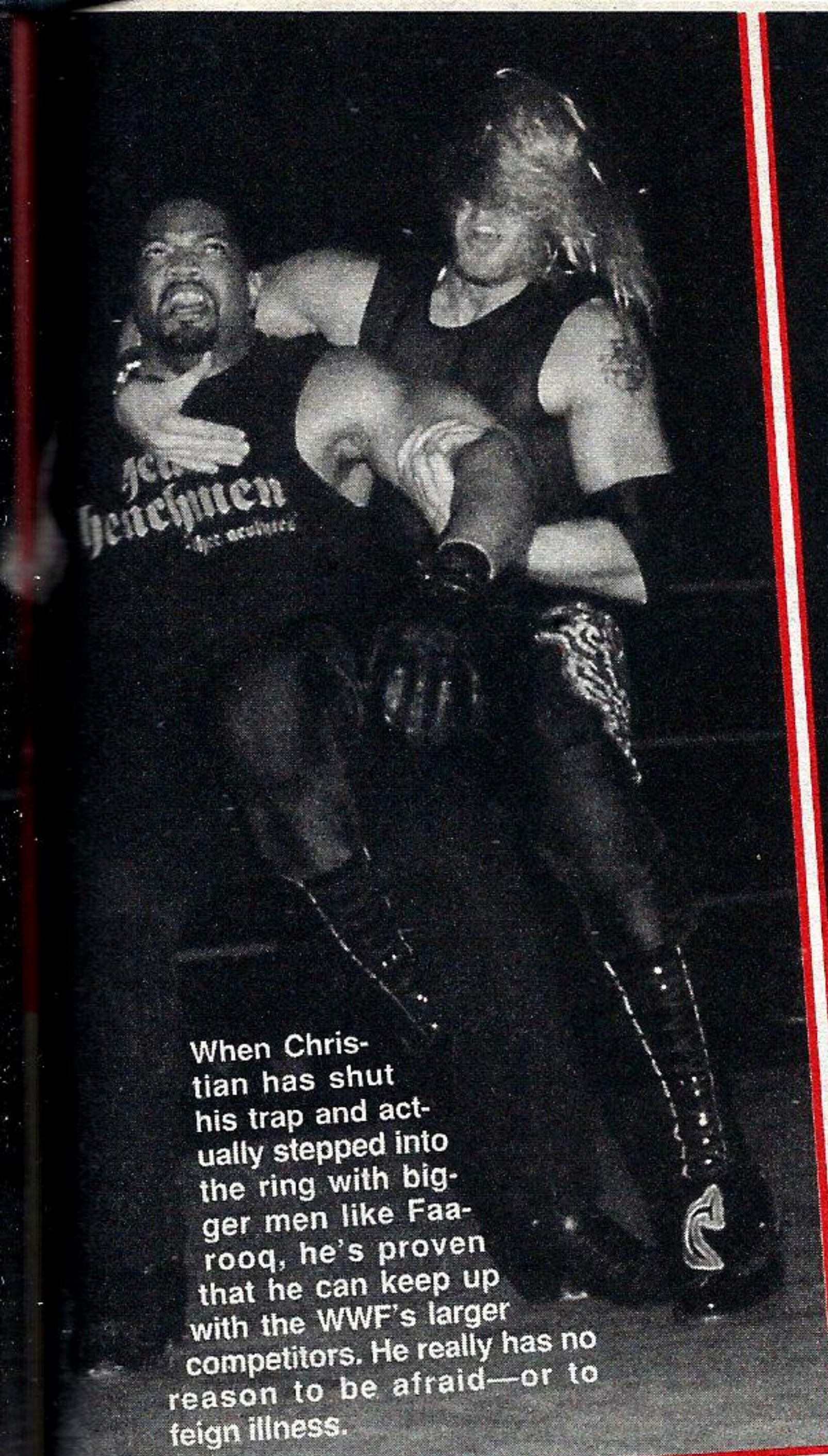
through a toothy grin. "As two dudes who exude supreme and total hiptitude."

Those who see through the Southern California haze, however, know that Edge and Christian could just as easily leave their mark in the WWF as the most technically gifted tag team in the federation since The Hart Foundation.

Edge's angular frame allows him to use a confounding combination of aerial and power-based maneuvers, while Christian's mat game gives the team an element of science. All they really lack is the right attitude, and if they ever find that, Edge and Christian could be tag team champs—or at least the WWF's most dominant team—for a long, long time.

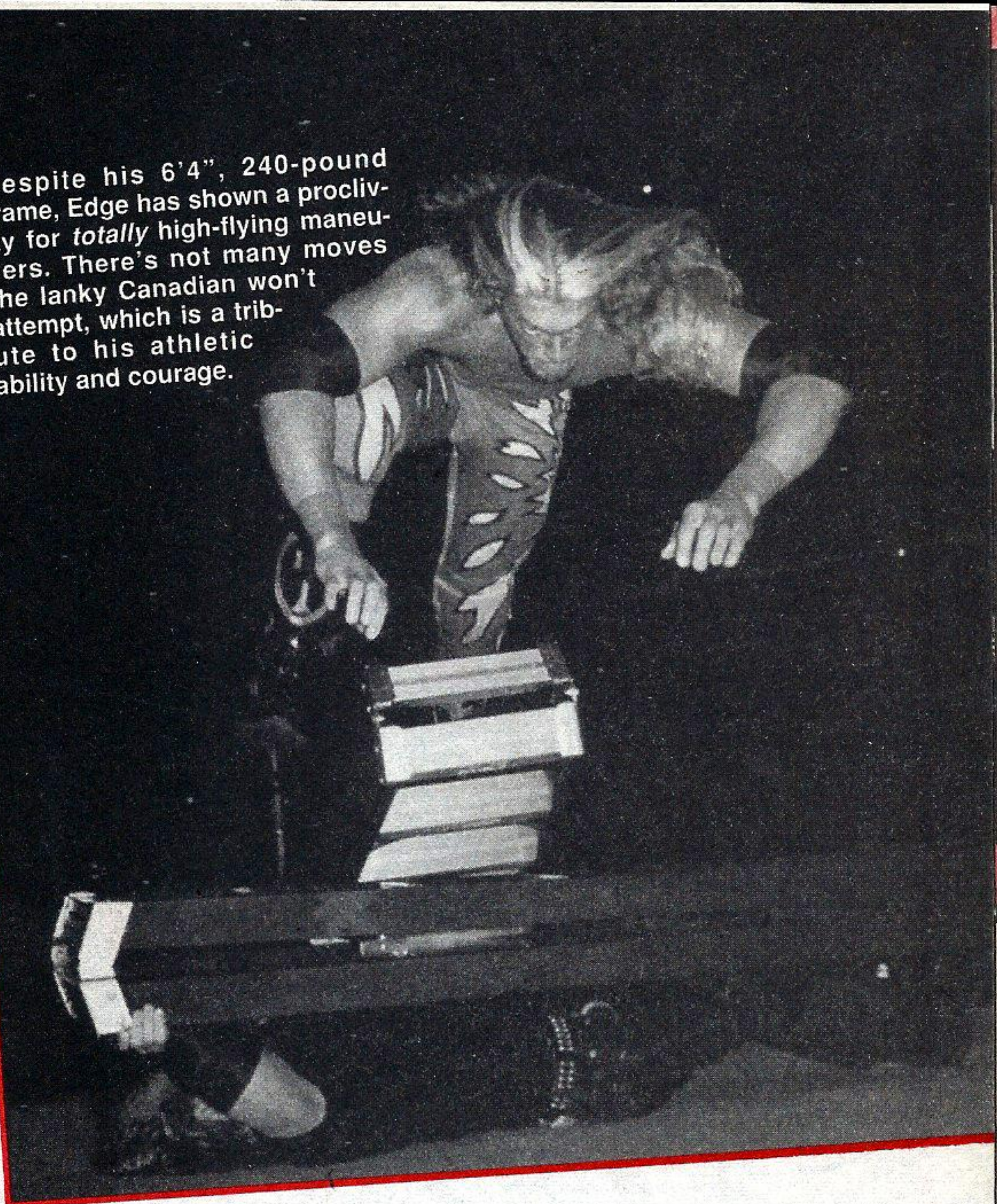
"We had the right attitude," said Edge, "and we wrestled on *Heat* for a year."

"Yeah," agreed Christian. "We



When Christian has shut his trap and actually stepped into the ring with bigger men like Faarooq, he's proven that he can keep up with the WWF's larger competitors. He really has no reason to be afraid—or to feign illness.

Despite his 6'4", 240-pound frame, Edge has shown a proclivity for *totally* high-flying maneuvers. There's not many moves the lanky Canadian won't attempt, which is a tribute to his athletic ability and courage.



had fangs and drank blood and walked around with mean scowls on our faces. The right attitude reeked of total sucktitude."

Actually, the only thing that reeks of sucktitude is the total lack of respect Edge and Christian have shown for the tag straps. They have routinely ducked the WWF's number-one contenders, often basing their reluctance to wrestle on phantom injuries or preposterous ailments.

Faarooq, for one, has grown so tired of their act that he's no longer interested in winning the tag title with Bradshaw; he just wants a chance to knock some sense into their heads.

"Winning the belts is cool because it means you're the champs, but I just want to mess up their pretty faces," said Faarooq. "They can't wrestle us because Christian has the sniffles? Come on, man! That's the weakest excuse I ever heard."

Even The Hardy Boyz, who expressed respect for Christian and Edge during the height of their thrilling feud, have been put off by their bubble gum attitude.

"What's all this nonsense about flash photography and teen idols?" asked Jeff Hardy. "What a load of crap."

"I think they need to get back into the ring with us," Matt Hardy suggested. "We can remind them what wrestling is all about."

Right here is where Ross says many WWF tag teams make their big mistake. They buy the pretty boy act and underestimate the talent and resolve of Christian and Edge. In fact, when Christian and Edge have agreed to defend their title, they've looked almost unbeatable in the ring.

"Let's face it," Ross said. "The only thing that's changed about these two is their attitude. Sure, they annoy fans. They get under people's skin, too. But the fact is,

they can still flat-out wrestle. They can still bring it. And I think when all is said and done, WWF fans will recognize Edge and Christian for their ability, not some hokey gimmick."

Unfortunately, the longer the gimmick continues, the more likely these two great talents are to ruin that legacy, but that doesn't seem to phase them.

"Like, what's the big deal," asked Christian. "Does it really matter how the fans remember us? I mean, when we step to the ring, it's like a sea of flashbulbs out there. It totally freaks me out. We are, like, so hot right now."

"Besides," added Edge, "everybody already knows we're great wrestlers. So, *duh!*"

Ross knows it. The WWF fans know it. More importantly, the WWF roster is finding it out the hard way. But if Edge and Christian don't ease up on the pretty boy routine, the point might become a moot one. □

JEFF PETERSON

Winning the **Battle Of His Life** *... For His Life!*

Jeff Peterson was already an inspiration, experiencing more success at age 18 than most wrestlers 10 years his senior. But his pro accomplishments pale in comparison to the war he is now waging



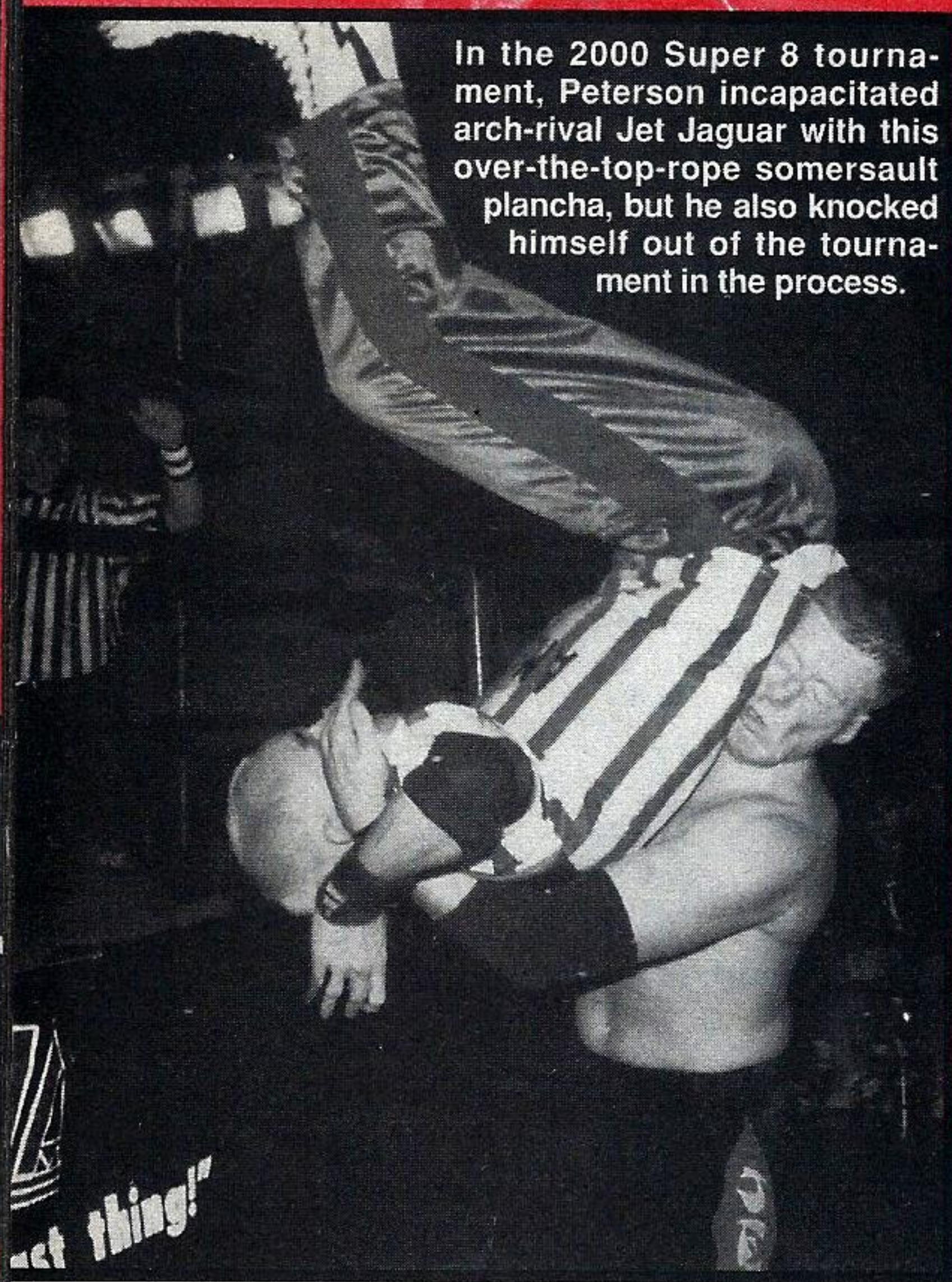
Jeff Peterson got a standing ovation from the crowd when he made an appearance at an ECWA show in Delaware in July (opposite page). Although he was quite sick at the time, Jeff (with his parents and grandmother, right) proudly attended his high school graduation a month earlier.



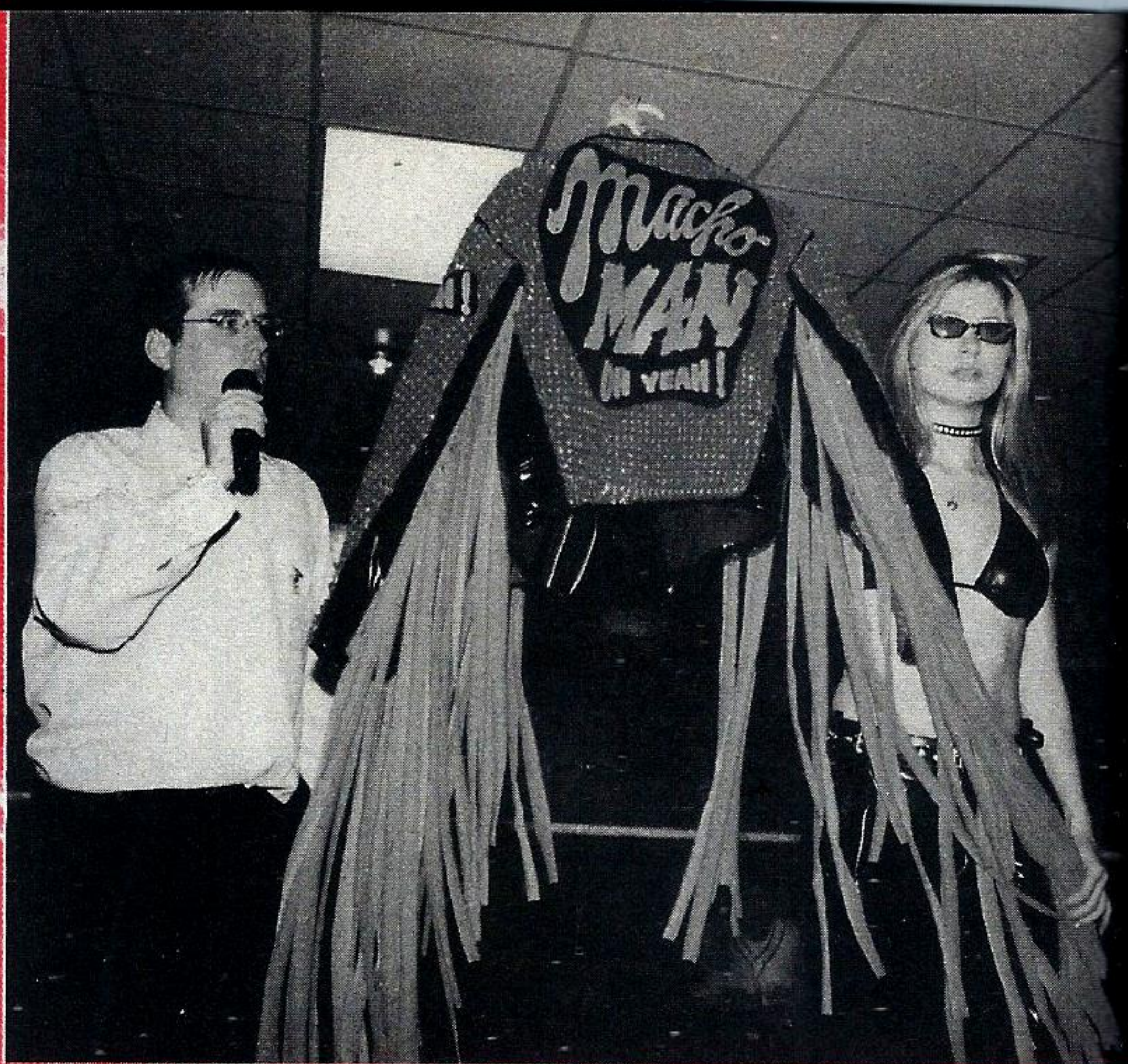
Though his fight against cancer is the biggest match of his life, Peterson vows to one day re-enter the squared circle to take on foes like Christopher Daniels. Like a true champion, Peterson refuses to give up on his dream.

By Harry Burkett

NOT MANY HIGH school kids know the thrill of competing in arenas across the country, let alone the exhilaration of participating in the ECWA Super 8 tournament. But "All-American" Jeff Peterson had, and he was racing through life at astonishing speed. Accustomed to all the green lights telling him to "Go, go, go," Peterson was halted when he saw a light turn yellow ... then an alarming red.



In the 2000 Super 8 tournament, Peterson incapacitated arch-rival Jet Jaguar with this over-the-top-rope somersault plancha, but he also knocked himself out of the tournament in the process.



That's when Jeff Peterson's career—and life as he knew it—stopped.

Life, as Peterson knew it, had been wonderful. Peterson, whose uncle is East Coast Wrestling Association promoter Jim Kettner, got hooked on the sport while hanging out backstage with the professionals. He watched the matches intently, picking up nuances some veterans never learn. He had a deep appreciation for ring psychology and became an avid student of the game. Aside from the hundreds of hours he spent watching videotapes, he learned the fundamentals from instructor Lance Diamond (now ECW's Simon Diamond) at the ECWA's WrestleTech training school.

Within a couple of years, Peterson was a regular in Independent Pro Wrestling, based in his hometown of Tampa. He was a crowd favorite in IPW, and his feud with Jet Jaguar, whom he defeated for the IPW light heavyweight title, never failed to draw interest. Peterson reached the peak of his young career by competing in the

round opponent? You guessed it, Jet Jaguar. Peterson attempted a plancha from the ring to the arena floor when he had the wind knocked out of him. Jaguar somehow rolled him up for the victory, but was himself unable to continue on in the tournament due to the after-effects of Peterson's plancha.

Peterson's failure to win the Super 8 wasn't a big deal. The fact that he had simply qualified for the prestigious tournament while still in high school was the real story.

That story turned tragic on April 14, 2000, when Peterson was diagnosed with cancer.

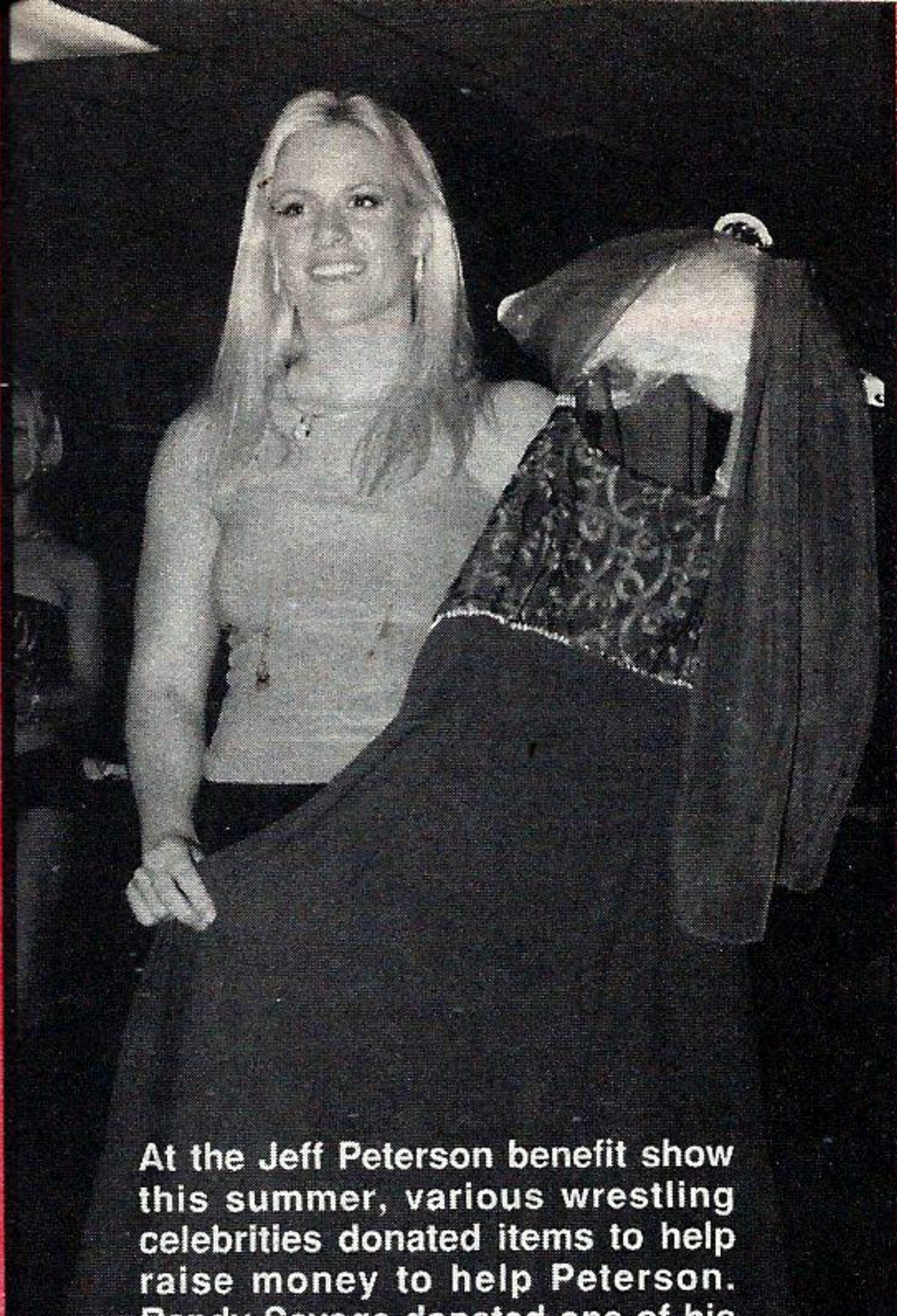
"Ever since January, I had suffered from shortness of breath, fatigue, and a real bad cold," recalled Peterson. "I thought it was bronchitis, but I just couldn't shake it. When I had it checked out, the doctors found a mass in my chest. The doctors said if I had continued wrestling, fluid would have caused my lungs to collapse."

The news was a huge blow to Peterson and his family. Peterson wondered whether he could finish

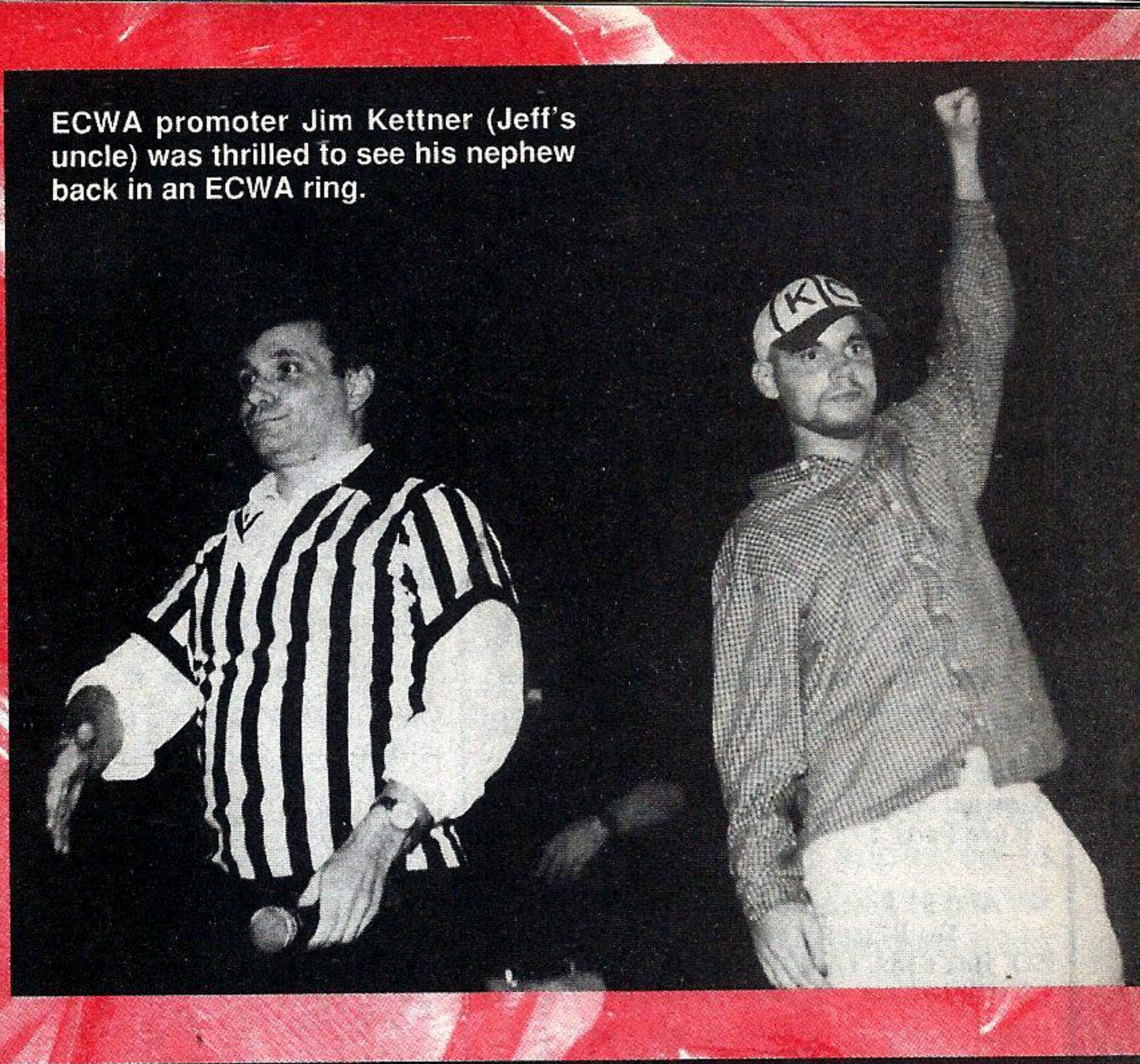
his last year of high school. He was scheduled to compete in the ECWA that weekend and had exciting plans for his career in the near future. Those were the easy problems. The life-and-death repercussions of being a cancer victim were almost too frightening to contemplate.

At a time when Peterson's biggest worries should have been his senior prom and graduation, his greatest concern was his own survival. He underwent intensive chemotherapy for several weeks. The once-active young man became lethargic, tired, and depressed. Maintaining a positive attitude turned out to be a bigger challenge than winning the Super 8, but he knew it would be crucial for any chance of recovery.

"The people around me have made all the difference," said Peterson. "My mom's taken good care of me all of my life, and this was no different. My classmates sent me cards and were very supportive. Also, my teachers sent my schoolwork home to me and did everything they could to make sure I graduated on time. Keeping a positive attitude and being with people who share that attitude is



At the Jeff Peterson benefit show this summer, various wrestling celebrities donated items to help raise money to help Peterson. Randy Savage donated one of his outfits for auction (opposite page), and WCW's Mona donated one of her dresses (above).



ECWA promoter Jim Kettner (Jeff's uncle) was thrilled to see his nephew back in an ECWA ring.

the key. Praying is important, too."

As Peterson continues to fight for his life, concerns about his career have become a distant second in his priorities. In the back of his mind, however, returning to action is always an important consideration.

"Wrestling is Jeff's number-one love," commented Kettner. "He's only 18 and already competed throughout the country, not only in Florida and Delaware, but also Ohio and California. There were even plans for him to wrestle in Japan.

"Besides his genuine natural talent, the main reason for Jeff's success is that's he well-grounded. He's more concerned about learning all he can learn about wrestling. That's the enjoyment he gets from wrestling, and that's what gives him so much desire. It's the desire to improve. Some kids want to swing from the chandelier right away. Jeff was just as excited to learn the basics."

Peterson hadn't been in wrestling long, but he obviously earned

a lot of respect and affection. He received cards, letters, and gifts from across the country. As his fight against cancer continues, he receives encouragement via phone, e-mail, and personal visits on a daily basis.

Fortunately, it looks as if Peterson has won the first fall of this best-of-three falls contest. The chemotherapy has been effective. The mass is gone from his chest, and he is in remission. He is scheduled for a biopsy to determine whether the cancer has gone to his bone marrow. It would be unfortunate if that turned out to be the case, but doctors say at least that would be a more treatable form of cancer. Peterson's prognosis is guarded, yet optimistic. Doctors say he has an 80 percent chance of making a full recovery.

Peterson feels good now. Sure, some days are better than others, and it's on those days when he seizes the opportunity to get out of the house. "I went to Universal Studios last week," he said. "I even went on a couple of rollercoasters. It just depends on how I feel on a given day."

Every good day boosts his con-

fidence. As Peterson becomes more active, the more he considers a wrestling comeback.

"I have to go through about two more years of chemotherapy, but it won't be as intense as the first few months," he said. "If I'm in remission, I go into a maintenance phase, meaning the chemo will be reduced and I can get by with more pills and shots. Assuming I'll be cancer-free in the near future, doctors have said it could be anytime between six and 18 months. I'll return sooner if I can, but you never know. Time changes everything."

Peterson's love of wrestling has helped him through the most difficult experiences of the past few months. When an infection landed him in the hospital for four weeks, he watched the entire WrestleMania box set collection, ranging from I to XV. He was able to put aside his life-and-death concerns for at least a few short hours and think about less weighty matters, such as deciding upon the best WrestleMania.

"Without a doubt, WrestleMania X was the best," he enthused.

Keep on fighting, Jeff Peterson, and you might be in the next box set. □

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

debut, and it won't be Spike or any other known Dudley. Buh Buh Ray and D-Von haven't found a long-lost sibling in a while. I have a feeling the WWF is searching.

5. Despite being retired, Mick Foley will wrestle in at least three matches, one of which will be a "Hell In A Cell" match. Commissioner Foley just won't be able to keep himself away.

JIM COFFMAN
Moose Pass, AK

OPPOSITES DON'T ATTRACT

I have never seen anything more beautiful than the splitting up of Shane Douglas and Buff Bagwell.

No matter what anyone says about the guy, "The Franchise" is one of WCW's best all-around wrestlers. It doesn't matter if he's competing in the ring or on the microphone—he has you intrigued and interested. Buff Bagwell, however, is just a blowhard put out there to bring female fans to the arenas. They were opposites from the very beginning and never belonged together.

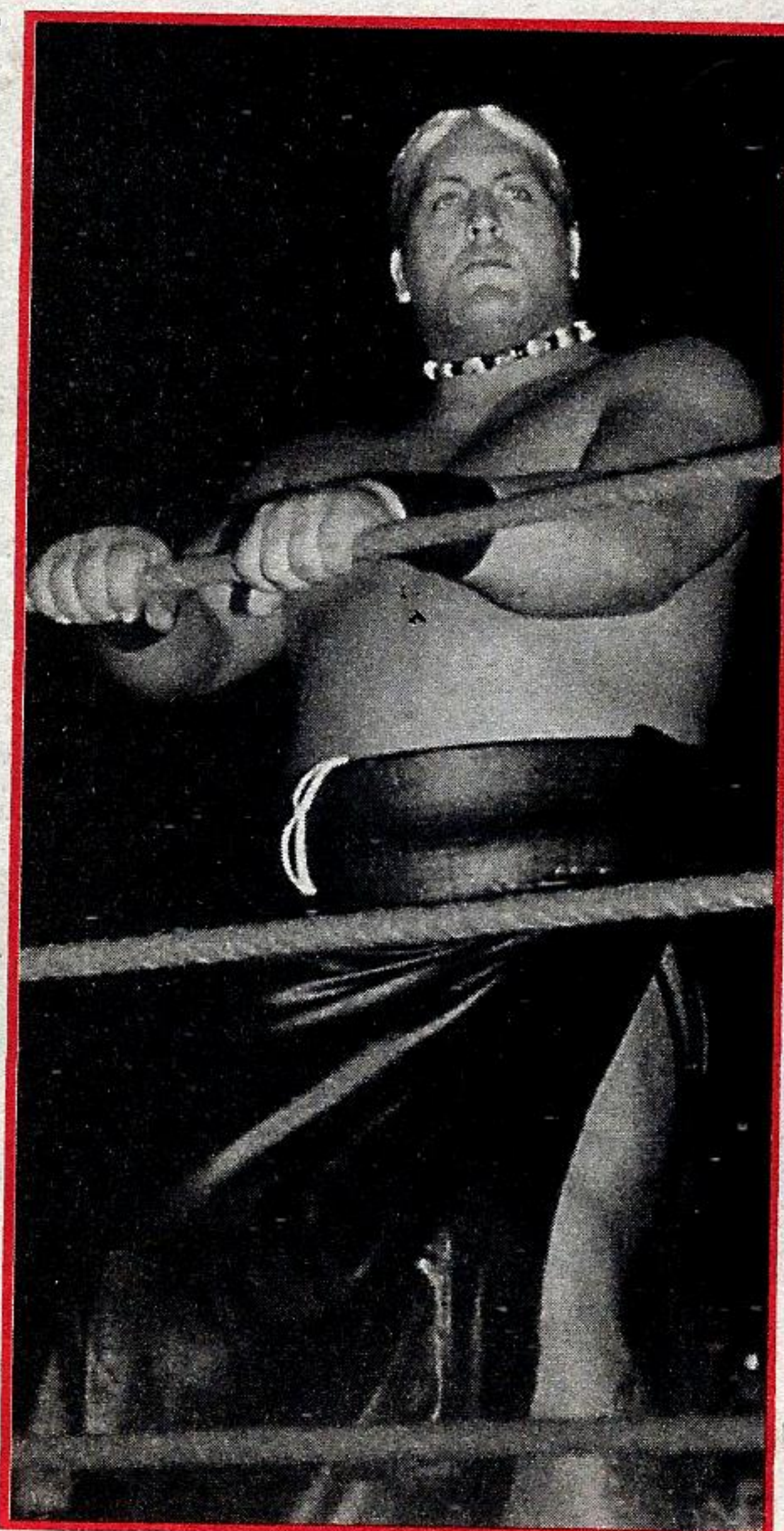
What were Vince Russo and Eric Bischoff thinking?

BART RIFTON
Watkins Glen, NY

NO SHOW STOPPER

I realize that "Big Variety Show! 'Hollywood, Here I Come!'" (September 2000) was meant to be a positive story on the career of The Big Show, but I can't help feeling that all the story did was paint The Big Show as a big joke.

Yeah, Big Show likes to dress up and impersonate people like Val Venis, Hulk Hogan, and Rikishi, but he is also a skilled competitor who is a for-



The Big Show makes reader Gregory Williams laugh by doing characters like Showkishi. Williams, however, believes that THE WRESTLER treated Show unfairly in a recent feature.

mer WCW and WWF world champion.

My complaint about the story is that people complained about Show's lack of charisma for years, but as soon as he developed a personality and began to make people laugh, he was made out to be a fool.

People need to take The Big Show for what he is: a big guy who thoroughly enjoys what he does for a living.

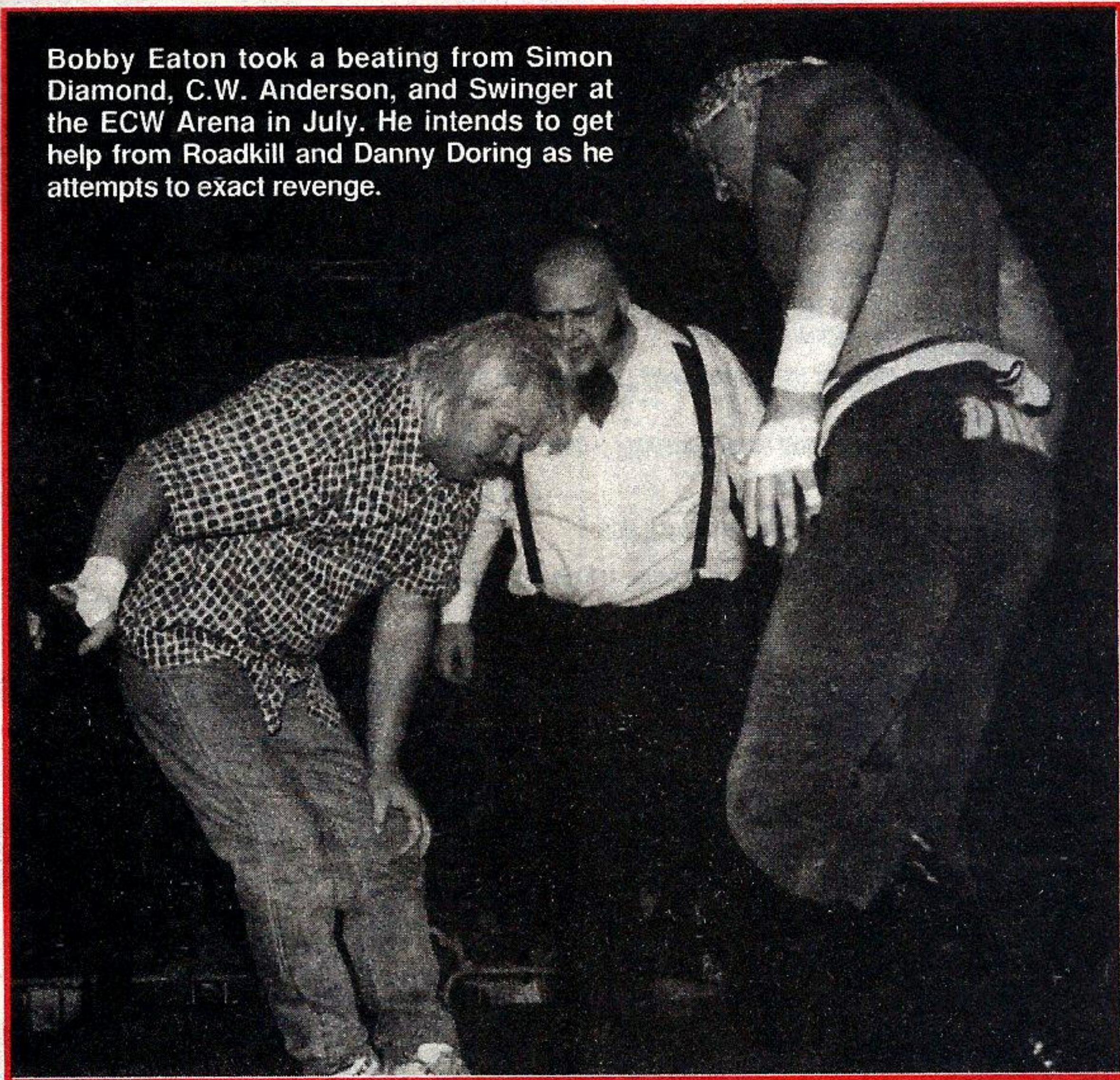
GREGORY WILLIAMS
Plain City, OH ☐

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Or e-mail letters to:
yourletters@aol.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)

Bobby Eaton took a beating from Simon Diamond, C.W. Anderson, and Swinger at the ECW Arena in July. He intends to get help from Roadkill and Danny Doring as he attempts to exact revenge.



Saturn's best bet might be calling **Shane McMahon** and seeing if the spokesman for **Chris Benoit** is willing to add another Radical to his stable.

Some people were surprised by **Trish Stratus'** cold-hearted display of violence in pushing **Lita** off a ladder and through a table on *Raw* recently. I was surprised by how easily Trish stood on the top of the 12-foot ladder preparing for what appeared to be a splash onto Lita. We've seen Lita exhibit some incredible aerial skills already. Something tells me Lita better not take Trish too lightly, or she's going to get hurt.

Mikey Whipwreck is doing his best to heat things up in ECW, and he's using his "fabulous flaming stick of doom" to help him. Whipwreck has undergone a startling transformation since he began hanging around with **The Sinister Minister**, and fireballs have replaced the Whippersnapper as his favorite weapon of choice.

That's what's happening. Catch ya next issue. □

him," Raven said. "It's about time that Raven was a champion again, and what could be better than crushing Tazz to do it?"

Congratulations go out to "**Big Poppa Pump**" **Scott Steiner** on his recent nuptials. Does this mean we can expect to see little genetic freaks running around in the near future? Lord help us.

Locker room sources have told me that **Perry Saturn** has met with **Terri**, and the two are close to hammering out a deal. Saturn's lack of title success since jumping to the WWF has frustrated him, but hook-

ing up with that little she-devil would be a huge mistake. Since splitting with husband **Dustin Rhodes**, Terri has done nothing but exploit everyone in her path.



Trish Stratus showed her cowardly side when she attacked Lita from behind and choked her. She showed a sadistic side when she shoved her off a ladder and through a table. There's no doubt Trish is very dangerous.

Rick Rude vs. Billy Jack Haynes

"I AM WRESTLING'S SEXIEST SUPERSTAR!"

BY RAVISHING RICK RUDE

In this exclusive for The Wrestler, one of the most talented and controversial figures in the sport explains exactly what sets him apart from the rest of the "pretty boy" pack

I, RAVISHING RICK RUDE, am unique. There are a lot of so-called pretty boys in this sport who are always popping off about their good looks and bragging about all the women who squeal at their muscles. That's old news, we've had that kind of thing in wrestling since Gorgeous George. It bugs me that I'm *lumped in* with all these characters, so a lot of fans who see my magnificent physique and the ladies who flock around me assume that I'm arrogant and stupid, too. Nothing could be further from the truth, brothers and sisters. I have that something extra, that high-powered hyper-emotional super-normal stun-gun X-factor quotient that makes me unbeatable, in and out of the ring. Let's just call it by a generic name: RAVISHING.

RAVISHING is my personal cre-

do, my code of living and my lifestyle. It is my soul. There's no point in talking about RICK RUDE without realizing exactly what it means to be RAVISHING: RAVISHING is RICK RUDE, Mr. RUDE is ravishing, and you can't separate the two at all. That's why I type my name in capital letters, and that's why I use it as a noun, adjective, adverb, whatever. My *life* is an action verb, and RAVISHING can be any part of speech I choose.

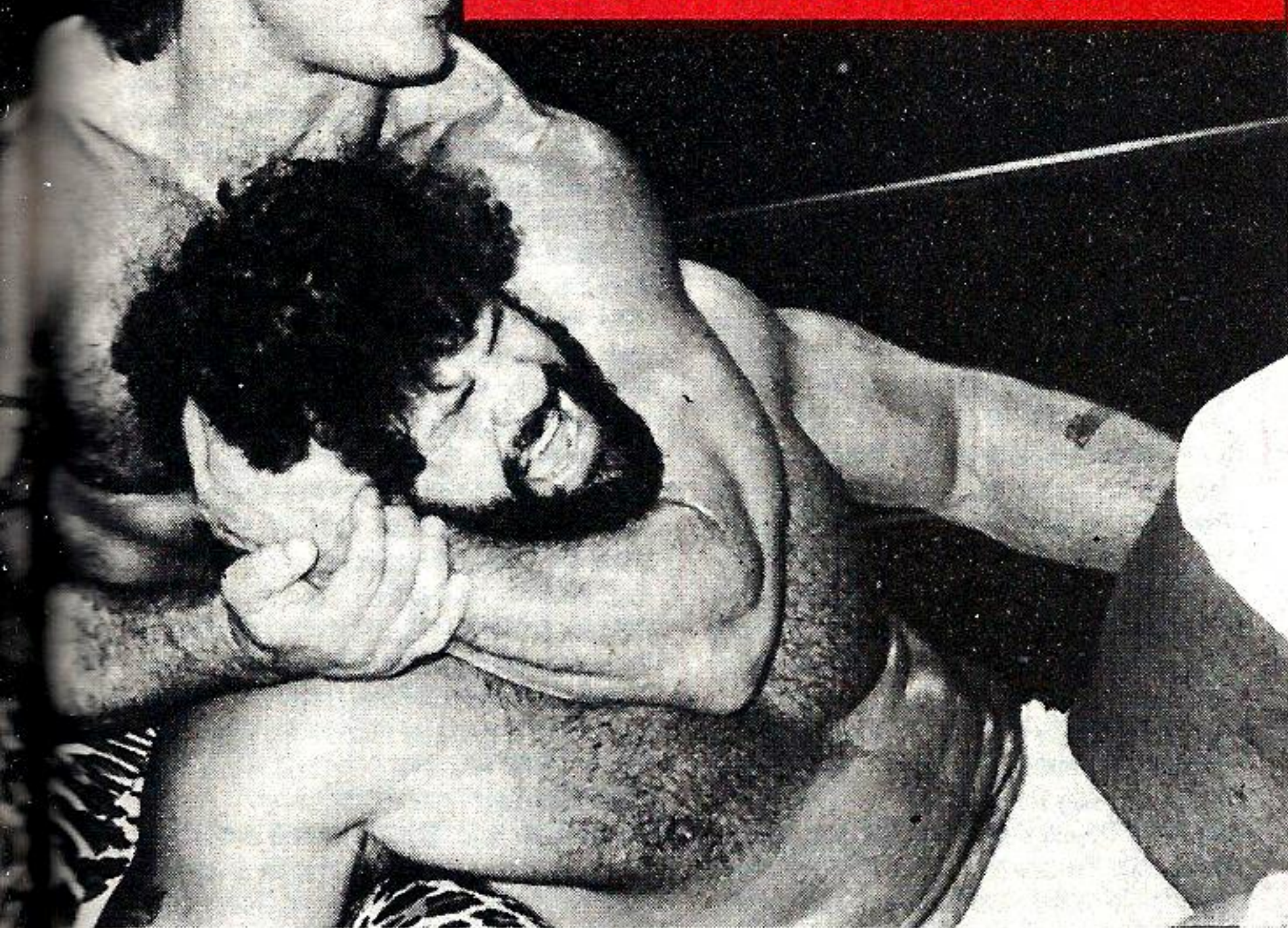
In fact, I've had my name legally changed from "Rick Rude" to RAVISHING RICK RUDE. Three names are necessary to contain my greatness. My driver's license, my insurance papers and ID, my bank accounts and contracts and fat paychecks are all made out to RAVISHING RICK RUDE, capitals included. Readers may or may not

recall that this isn't the first time I have had my name legally changed. After I set my priorities straight and began to think of myself first and the fans least, a crucial step on the path to maturity and enlightenment, I abandoned my given name "Rood" for the more RAVISHING moniker I now claim for my own. (That ugly, guttural "Rood" is "door" spelled backward—and that's exactly where my career was going before I changed my name, backward out the door leading to fame, money, and brilliance. But that's what happens to any young wrestler who hangs around Mr. Wrestling II Old for II long.)

So what is RAVISHING all about? I could go on for months, even years, about the concept and what makes it so important to me. I believe it would revolutionize the

WRESTLER CLASSIC!

Rick Rude should have had his picture next to the word "arrogance" in the dictionary. He was so cocky—yet so good. If you never got to watch him, you don't want to miss this "Wrestler Classic" from December 1985!



Rick Rude uses his huge biceps to cinch down on a headlock against Billy Jack Haynes (above). Rick prefers to use his muscles to impress young ladies, in this case his former valet, Angel (right). RAVISHING Rick fires a right hand at Haynes (below).



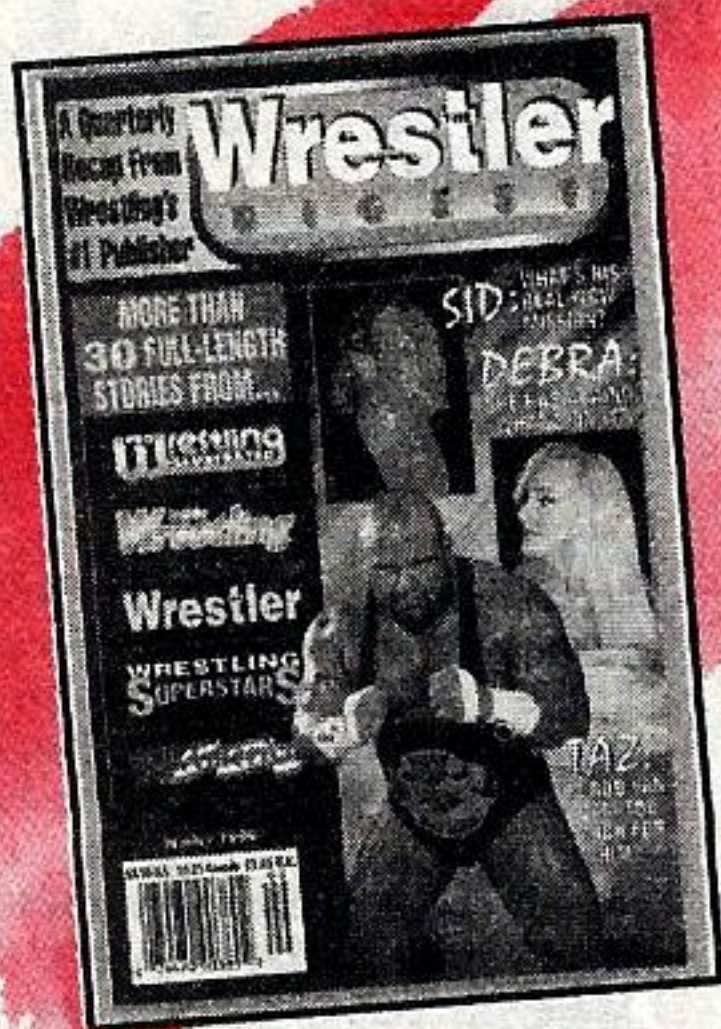
Photos by Eddie Cheslock

social mores of America and the world at large. It could only compare to the great Hugh Hefner's legendary "Playboy Philosophy," which took years to complete in monthly magazine installments. Unfortunately, *The Wrestler* organization has taken my request for a monthly column outlining the RAVISHING philosophy "under consideration," so my manager, Percy Pringle, is talking to other fine publishers—Mr. Hefner, Mr. Guccione, and Mr. Flynt for example—in pursuit of a forum in which I can discuss the RAVISHING philosophy in more detail. Allow me now to try and elaborate in the regrettably brief space that I have.

The Number One component of RAVISHING is the root of all life itself: S-E-X. To put it country simple, I am wrestling's sexiest superstar. Everything I do in every minute of every waking hour is sexual. I have taken the energy of the

(Continued on page 82)

A LOT TO DIGEST!



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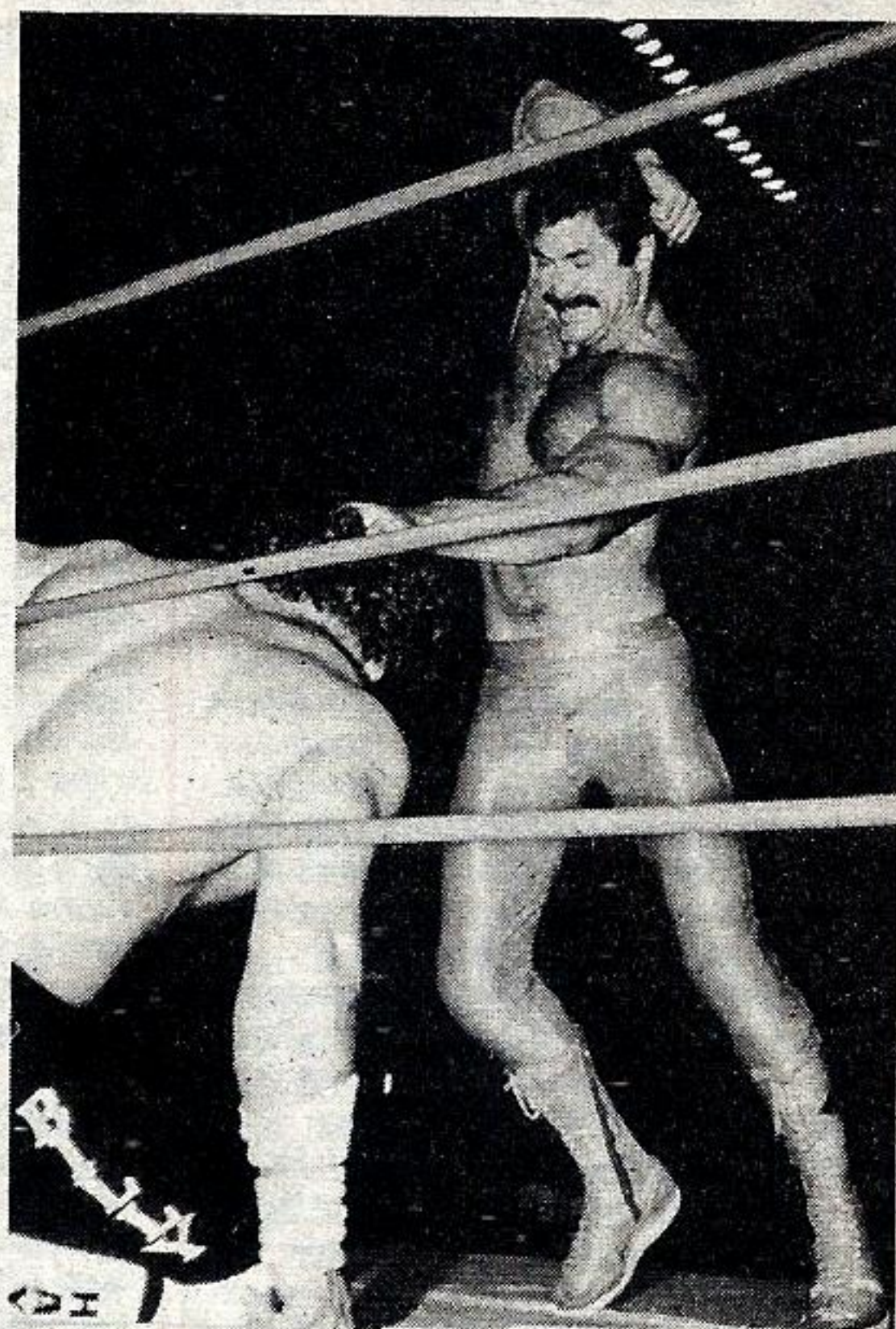
(Continued from page 79)

universe—the sexually-charged biological forces that maintain life itself—and have harnessed it for my own personal use. *That* is the secret of my genuine sex appeal, and *that* is why the droves of women I must gently brush away like flies are attracted to me. Mine is a *natural* beauty, powered by the sexual energy of the universe. Believe me, I have given this subject a great deal of study, and any further explanation would go straight over any wrestling fan's head.

Another major facet of RAVISHING is obvious: wrestling skill. Most of the fans out there who boo me have no idea that I was once considered the greatest amateur wrestler in the world. Upon turning pro, I trained with Verne Gagne—now, the man's always been a dolt, the very antithesis of RAVISHING, but he taught me a lot about the science of wrestling and greatly eased the transition from the amateur ranks. Don't make the mistake of calling me a "rulebreaker"—I win my matches cleanly, with cunning and grace. My tactical brilliance devastates my opponents and the agility of my body in fluid form sets all the women smoldering. I win matches and dates at the same time.

Another open secret of the RAVISHING formula is dress. I may not be the best-dressed man in wrestling, but my beautiful robes accentuate the lithe contours of my luscious body. If I dressed as flashy as, say, a Ric Flair or a Jesse Ventura, it would only distract the women from the bionic orgone forces pulsating from my sleek physique. Yes, I'm a snappy dresser, by far the best in Florida, but I'm no peacock. Moderation here is the key.

Now compare my natural eroticism to the oafish pretty boy poses of one man in particular, Billy Jack Haynes. Here's the buffoon the



Rude tries to change the appearance of Haynes, the most recent winner of the "Wrestling's Sexiest Superstar" contest.

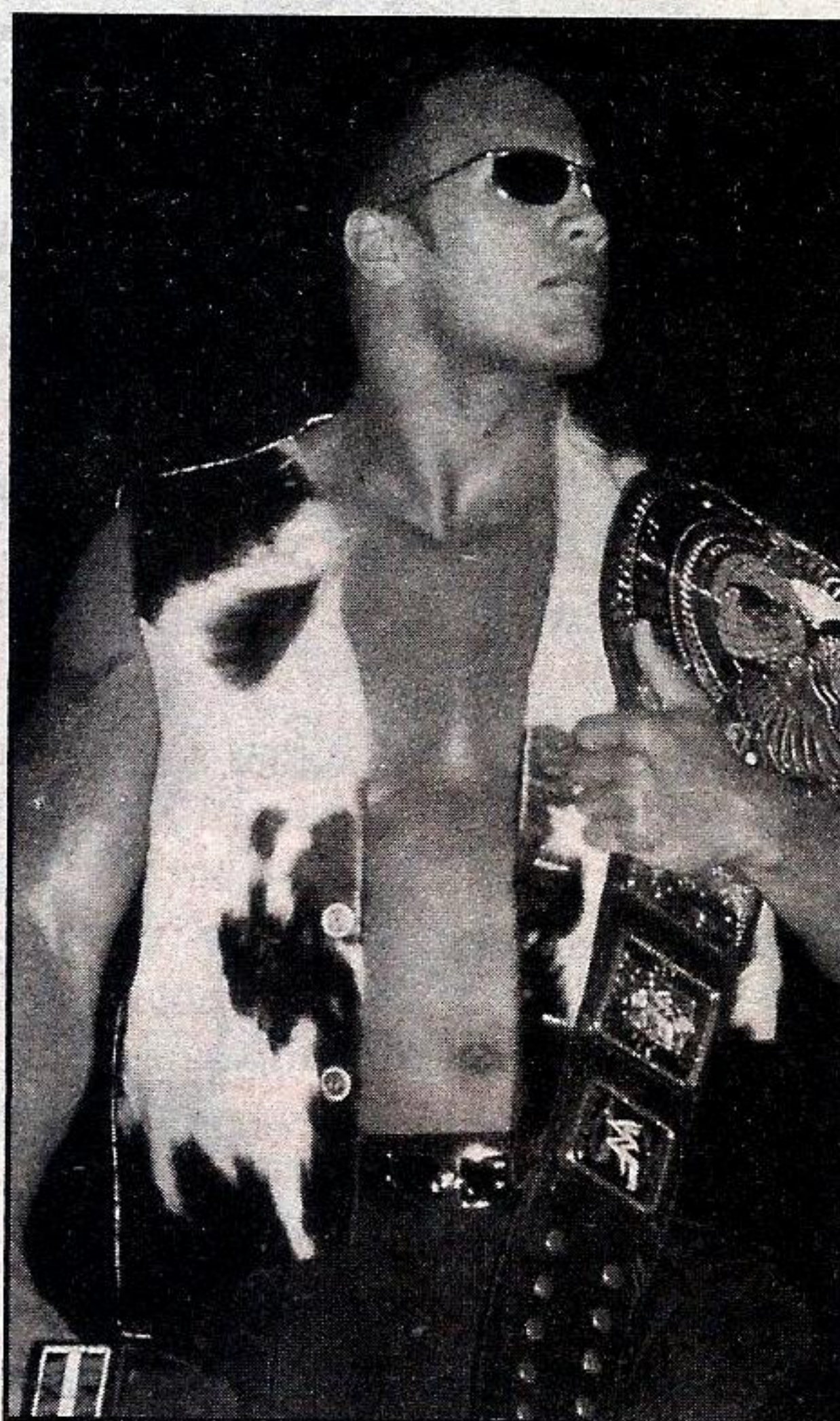
readers of *Wrestling Superstars* mysteriously selected as "Wrestling's Sexiest Superstar" (in the Winter 1984 issue). I laughed then, and I chuckle heartier now that I've seen him in the flesh. Here's a man (?) who spends thousands of dollars on hired models and disease-stricken barmaids to be seen with him in public. Any expert in the sport will attest to the fact that he's an oaf in the ring—I'm just afraid he'll start learning some holds from being continually caught in them. And Billy Jerk's wardrobe is perfect for a caribou-skinning in the Kiwanis parking lot. The man has no class, and he would never understand the bionic orgone roots of my sexual energy.

I hereby challenge all the intelligent fans out there to fire off angry letters and petitions supporting my claim to be wrestling's sexiest hunk. It's not RAVISHING enough to pound Billy Jerk into a bloody pulp in the ring and leave it at that. I want to save his life by showing up his stuffed ego for the empty-headed delusion it really is. RAVISHING RICK RUDE thanks you.

Wrestler

TOP 10

- 1 **THE ROCK**
272, Miami, FL
(1) WWF World champion
- 2 **JUSTIN CREDIBLE**
227, Waterbury, CT
(5) ECW World champion
- 3 **TRIPLE-H**
284, Greenwich, CT
(4) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 4 **LANCE STORM**
231, Calgary, Alberta
(-) WCW U.S. & hardcore champion
- 5 **BOOKER T**
250, Houston, TX
(-) WCW World champion
- 6 **JEFF JARRETT**
230, Nashville, TN
(2) No. 2 contender: WCW World title
- 7 **KENSUKE SASAKI**
251, Tokyo, Japan
(3) IWGP heavyweight champion
- 8 **CHRIS BENOIT**
218, Edmonton, Alberta
(-) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
- 9 **RHINO**
285, Detroit, MI
(8) ECW TV champion
- 10 **VAL VENIS**
250, Oakville, Ontario
(-) WWF Intercontinental champion



The Rock

TAG TEAMS

- 1 **KRONIC**
Combined weight: 622 pounds
(5) WCW World tag team champions
- 2 **TEST & ALBERT**
Combined weight: 642 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 3 **CHRISTIAN & EDGE**
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(2) WWF World tag team champions
- 4 **SATOSHI KIJIMA & HIROYOSHI TENZAN**
Combined weight: 493 pounds
(-) IWGP International tag team champions
- 5 **CHRIS CHETTI & NOVA**
Combined weight: 454 pounds
(9) No. 1 contenders: ECW World tag title
- 6 **BRADSHAW & FAAROOQ**
Combined weight: 599 pounds
(-) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 7 **JUVENTUD GUERRERA & REY MISTERIO**
Combined weight: 305 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 8 **JEFF & MATT HARDY**
Combined weight: 422 pounds
(7) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 9 **DANNY DORING & ROADKILL**
Combined weight: 533 pounds
(6) No. 2 contenders: ECW World tag title
- 10 **TOO COOL**
Combined weight: 433 pounds
(4) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

WCW

World Champion:

BOOKER T

(7) 250, Houston, TX

- 1—**LANCE STORM**
(-) 231, Calgary, Alberta
- 2—**JEFF JARRETT**
(C) 230, Nashville, TN
- 3—**BILL GOLDBERG**
(3) 283, Tulsa, OK
- 4—**MIKE AWESOME**
(6) 285, Tampa, FL
- 5—**CHRIS KANYON**
(-) 245, Queens, NY
- 6—**SHANE DOUGLAS**
(5) 255, Pittsburgh, PA
- 7—**LT. LOCO**
(8) 210, El Paso, TX
- 8—**THE GREAT MUTA**
(-) 245, Yamanishi, Japan
- 9—**SCOTT STEINER**
(1) 275, Detroit, MI
- 10—**VAMPIRO**
(4) 220, Thunder Bay, Ontario

WWF

World Champion:

THE ROCK

(C) 272, Miami, FL

- 1—**VAL VENIS**
(8) 250, Oakville, Ontario
- 2—**TRIPLE-H**
(2) 284, Greenwich, CT
- 3—**CHRIS BENOIT**
(4) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 4—**CHRIS JERICO**
(5) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- 5—**RIKISHI**
(-) 489, San Francisco, CA
- 6—**PERRY SATURN**
(-) 237, Boston, MA
- 7—**STEVE BLACKMAN**
(-) 245, Annville, PA
- 8—**THE UNDERTAKER**
(7) 328, Death Valley, CA
- 9—**KANE**
(6) 345, parts unknown
- 10—**KURT ANGLE**
(3) 233, Pittsburgh, PA

ECW

World Champion:

JUSTIN CREDIBLE

(C) 227, Waterbury, CT

- 1—**RHINO**
(1) 285, Detroit, MI
- 2—**ROB VAN DAM**
(4) 237, Battle Creek, MI
- 3—**TOMMY DREAMER**
(-) 265, Yonkers, NY
- 4—**YOSHIHIRO TAJIRI**
(7) 224, Tokyo, Japan
- 5—**JERRY LYNN**
(2) 224, Minneapolis, MN
- 6—**KID KASH**
(6) 230, Johnson City, TN
- 7—**THE SANDMAN**
(10) 244, Philadelphia, PA
- 8—**LITTLE GUIDO**
(9) 201, Howard Beach, NY
- 9—**SCOTTY ANTON**
(3) 235, Atlanta, GA
- 10—**C.W. ANDERSON**
(-) 237, Winston-Salem, NC

NWA

NWA Champion:

TITLE VACANT

- 1—**KEVIN NORTHCUTT**
(2) 348, Chalmette, LA
- 2—**KURRGAN**
(1) 345, Hamilton, Ontario
- 3—**STONE MOUNTAIN**
(7) 350, Stone Mountain, GA
- 4—**TRACEY SMOTHERS**
(6) 227, Atlanta, GA
- 5—**REDD DOGG BEGNAUD**
(-) 274, Lafayette, LA
- 6—**NICK DINSMORE**
(-) 226, Jefferson, IN
- 7—**EQUALIZER**
(4) 275, Atlantic Highlands, NJ
- 8—**NAOYA OGAWA**
(C) 286, Tokyo, Japan
- 9—**AWESOME ARPIN**
(-) 496, Parkersburg, WV
- 10—**GARY STEELE**
(3) 241, London, England

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue. Note: In an effort to keep the ratings as up-to-date as possible, these pages are often the last to be sent to the printer. Thus, the ratings may reflect changes not reflected in the remainder of the issue.

For period ended July 26, 2000

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—J.J. The Ring Crew Guy; 1—Glen Osbourne; 2—Cheetah Master; 3—B.W. Brown; 4—Mr. Ooh La La; 5—Charlie Haas; 6—Vince Goodnite; 7—Russ Haas; 8—Ty Street; 9—Trent Acid; 10—Mozart Fontaine.

HARDCORE CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Stevie Phillips; 1—Shawn Christopher; 2—Brock Landers; 3—Ric Gunner; 4—Beau James; 5—David O; 6—John Manson; 7—Louisville Mugger; 8—Jason Blade; 9—Paul Schon; 10—Twiztid.

MARYLAND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Jimmy Cicero; 1—Bruiser; 2—Julio Fantastico; 3—Tom Brandi; 4—Corporal Punishment; 5—Mikey Whipwreck; 6—Dino Devine; 7—Ronnie Zukko; 8—Christian York; 9—Chris Chetti; 10—Gillberg.

MASON DIXON WRESTLING: Champion—Mason Hunter; 1—Chick Scott; 2—The Latin Tornado; 3—Flemmo Guano; 4—Scotty McKeever; 5—The Nomad; 6—Ox Thrillbilly; 7—Joe Brody; 8—Punchy McGee; 9—Bob Brown; 10—The Masked Assassin.

OKLAHOMA PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Bull Schmitt; 1—Dark Angel; 2—Renegade; 3—Rocco Valentino; 4—Chief Red Eagle; 5—Splash Jackson; 6—Joey Cassanova; 7—Big Daddy Moore; 8—Bolo; 9—Vinnie Valentino; 10—Ian St. James.

POWER PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Spellbinder; 1—Khan; 2—Wolfie D; 3—Seven; 4—Blade Boudreaux; 5—Alan Steel; 6—Rob Harlem; 7—Bill Dundee; 8—Koko B. Ware; 9—Bulldog Raines; 10—Derrick King.

NWA WILDSIDE: Champion—Stone Mountain; 1—Terry Knight; 2—Eddie Golden; 3—David Young; 4—Jessie Taylor; 5—Rick Michaels; 6—A.J. Styles; 7—Scottie Wrenn; 8—J.C. Dazz; 9—Onyx; 10—Shank.

RHODE ISLAND WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Wolverine; 1—Danger Boy Alfredo; 2—Danny Cama; 3—Pierre the Mountie; 4—Dave Padula; 5—Thrash; 6—The Intern; 7—Max Brannigan; 8—Captain Maniac Cop; 9—Mael; 10—Danny Boy O'Callahan.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Scab; 1—Kross; 2—Cham Pain; 3—Uncle Tom Kettle; 4—Natrone Steele; 5—Rick Link; 6—Boris Dragoff; 7—Tears; 8—Juice; 9—Stratus; 10—Major DeBeers.

SOUTHERN STATES WRESTLING: Champion—The War Machine; 1—Chuck Jones; 2—Ron Ray; 3—Beau James; 4—Iron Cross; 5—K.C. Thunder; 6—Jimmy Valiant; 7—Buddy Landell; 8—Flex Armstrong; 9—Mike Cooper; 10—Porkchop Thomas.

THUNDER WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—J.T. Storm; 1—C.B. Cane; 2—Dagon Briggs; 3—Ashe Corvan; 4—Johnnie Lee; 5—O'Callaghan; 6—Big Nasty; 7—Dr. Feelgood; 8—Bull Matthews; 9—Shaun Brehth; 10—Wade Daniels.

UNIFIED CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Al Savage; 1—Chad Cheetum; 2—Big Nasty; 3—Tony Sweatt; 4—Steve Southern; 5—Joe Kane; 6—Marcell Pringle; 7—Aiky Breaky Kid; 8—Mr. Wrestling III; 9—Frank Smith; 10—Echmo.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:

KENSUKE SASAKI

(C) 251, Tokyo, Japan

1—TATSUHITO TAKAIWA

(1) 227, Tokyo, Japan

2—MASA CHONO

(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan

3—JUSHIN LIGER

(4) 222, Hiroshima, Japan

4—HIROYOSHI TENZAN

(6) 270, Tokyo, Japan

5—ATSUSHI ONITA

(-) 229, Nagasaki, Japan

6—KENDO KA SHIN

(-) 195, Tokyo, Japan

7—YUJI NAGATA

(8) 228, Tokyo, Japan

8—KOJI KANEMOTO

(-) 205, Osaka, Japan

9—SATOSHI KOJIMA

(7) 223, Tokyo, Japan

10—SHINJIRO OTANI

(10) 215, Yokohama, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:

TITLES VACANT

1—TOSHIAKI KAWADA

(1) 245, Ashikaga, Japan

2—MASA FUCHI

(2) 225, Tokyo, Japan

3—JOHNNY SMITH

(-) 235, Manchester, England

4—2 COLD SCORPIO

(-) 222, Denver, CO

5—STEVE WILLIAMS

(4) 265, Norman, OK

6—MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN

(-) 235, Honolulu, HI

7—WOLF HAWKFIELD

(6) 272, New Port Richey, FL

8—GENICHIRO TENRYU

(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan

9—STAN HANSEN

(3) 322, Borger, TX

10—MIKE BARTON

(-) 263, Austin, TX

EMLL

EMLL Champion:

UNIVERSO DOS MIL

(C) 240, Mexico City, Mexico

1—VILLANO III

(5) 220, Mexico City, Mexico

2—MASCARA ANOS DOS MIL

(6) 228, Mexico City, Mexico

3—PIERROTH JR.

(-) 251, Cuernavaca, Mexico

4—EMILIO CHARLES JR.

(-) 222, Mexico City, Mexico

5—FELINO

(-) 165, Mexico City, Mexico

6—MR. NIEBLA

(7) 185, Cuautitlan, Mexico

7—SHOCKER

(-) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico

8—APOLO DANTES

(-) 215, Guadalajara, Mexico

9—DR. WAGNER JR.

(-) 215, Mexico City, Mexico

10—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.

(1) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico

AAA

AAA Champion:

LATIN LOVER

(C) 190, Monterrey, Mexico

1—PERRO AGUAYO JR.

(-) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico

2—CIBERNETICO

(7) 235, Mexico City, Mexico

3—SUPER CRAZY

(-) 215, Mexico City, Mexico

4—OCTAGON

(3) 180, Monterrey, Mexico

5—HECTOR GARZA

(1) 220, Monterrey, Mexico

6—ABISMO NEGRO

(10) 210, Pachuca, Mexico

7—HEAVY METAL

(2) 180, Mexico City, Mexico

8—PENTAGON

(-) 175, Pachuca, Mexico

9—EL CANEK

(4) 235, Mexico City, Mexico

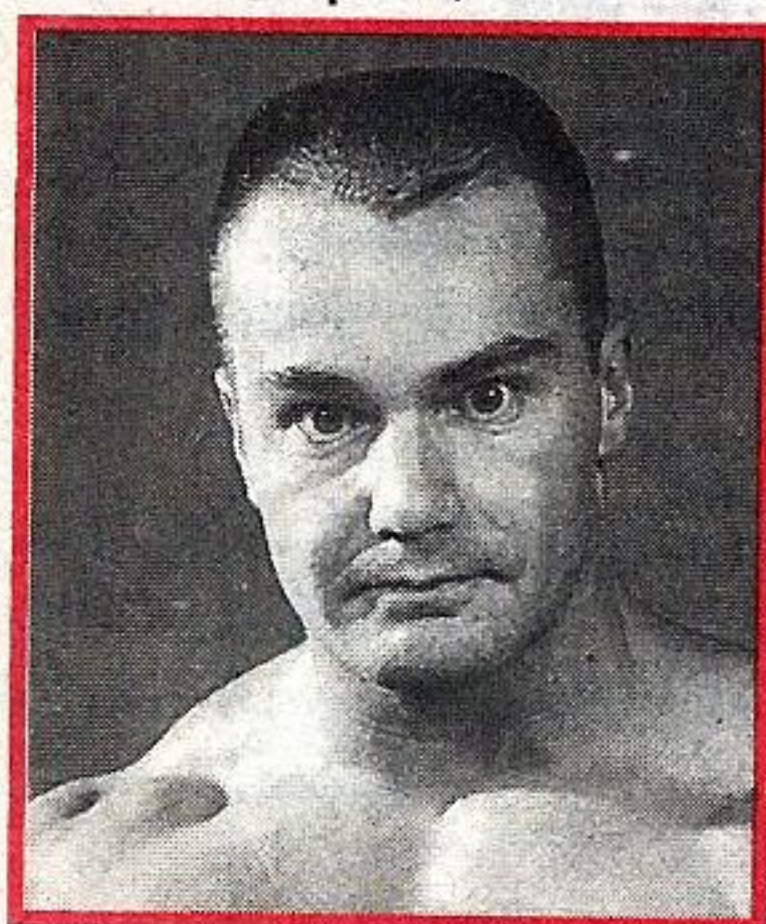
10—EL TEXANO

(5) 225, Mexico City, Mexico

Ratings

ANALYSIS

Canada's finest ... When **Lance Storm** made the official announcement that he had signed with WCW back in May, we weren't sure what to think. For the most part, it looked like Storm was making a good



Lance Storm

move. Certainly he was going to be making more money in WCW than he had been making in ECW, and he'd be seen by a lot more people every week, but could he become a huge star?

That was the question on the minds of a lot of people. Everyone who watched Storm in the past knew he was one of the better technical wrestlers in the world, but did he have the charisma to make it big in the Big Two? A story we presented in the October 2000 issue of *Inside Wrestling* suggested that his perceived lack of charisma wouldn't matter—that his wrestling skills alone would take him far in WCW.

Never did we imagine that he'd win two titles in WCW within about a month of arriving in the federation. And it's not like they were fluke wins, either. He had to beat three people in one night—**Buff Bagwell**, **Shane Douglas**, and **Mike Awesome**—to win the vacant U.S. championship (it's not the Canadian belt, Lance), and he beat all three of those opponents cleanly. Six nights later, he beat **Big Vito** in a terrific bout to claim the WCW hardcore belt. That, too, was a clean victory.

An equally big surprise is that his pro-Canada, anti-America stance has made him one of the most hated men in the federation in almost no time. He may not get people to chant his name or finish his catchphrases for him, but he does get WCW crowds to respond to him and his cocky, ultra-serious approach, and that's all any wrestler can hope to accomplish.

What does this all have to do with this month's ratings? You probably have already noticed that Storm is the highest-rated WCW wrestler in the Top 10. At number four, he's one spot above World heavyweight champion **Booker T**. We're not trying to say Booker's World title triumph was not a special or memorable one, but we determined that Storm was the more dominant wrestler during the period covered by these rankings. Booker struggled a bit against **Bill Gold-**

berg on the night he wrestled him twice (the July 24 *Nitro*) and had to have the first match stopped. He also fell to **Jeff Jarrett** in a non-title bunkhouse brawl the very next night at a taping of *Thunder*.

Don't be surprised if Storm challenges for the WCW World championship sometime in the next few months.

Canada's finest, part II ... Storm isn't the only Canadian to make the Top 10 this month, as Canada-born WWF stars **Chris Benoit** and **Val Venis** also made the cut. Benoit has already established himself as one of the elite stars of the WWF, and Venis is steadily climbing toward that level.



Chris Benoit

Benoit is proving time and time again that he is capable of beating any superstar on the WWF roster, including **The Rock**. Whether he can do that with the WWF championship on the line still remains to be seen. Venis might not be on the same level as The Rock and Benoit just yet, but a few months ago, we would have given him very little chance of beating someone like **Rikishi**. Much to our surprise, he not only upset the big man for the Intercontinental title at *Smackdown* back in July, but he survived a brutal cage match with him at *Fully Loaded* (thanks in part to **Tazz**).

We always thought Val was capable of accomplishing a lot if he dropped the adult film star persona and got more serious. There's no doubt that he's very serious inside the ring now.

Toronto natives **Edge** and **Christian** dropped a notch in our tag team ratings in this issue. Even though they were still the WWF World tag team champs at press time, their attempts to get out of defending the title by using inane, bogus excuses have been getting old. If they really believe they're the best tag team in the world, they should relish the opportunity to prove it night after night. □

That's it for this issue! If you have any questions or comments regarding our ratings or what you see on this page, we're always happy to get feedback from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

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